Vol. CXLIV No. 6

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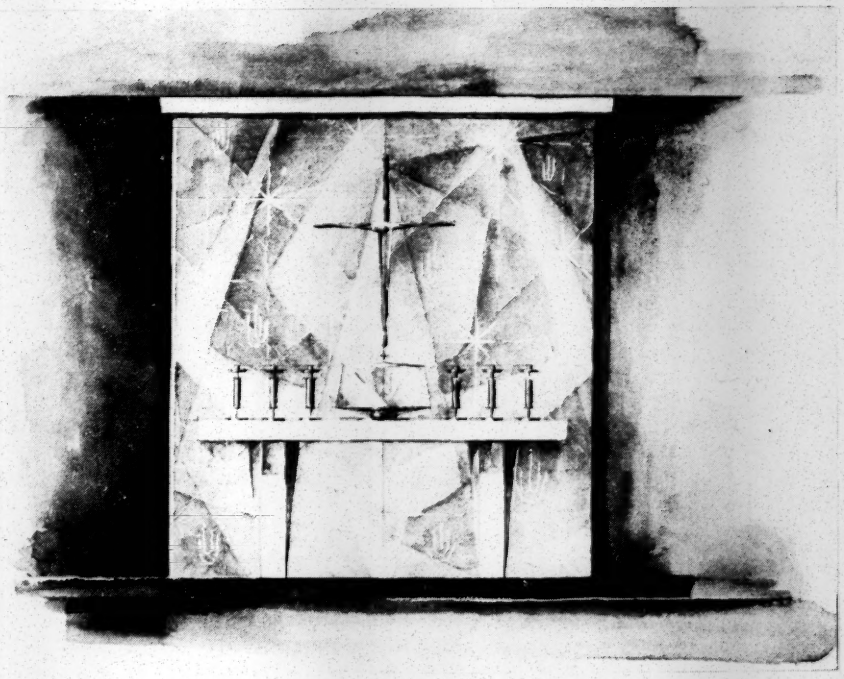

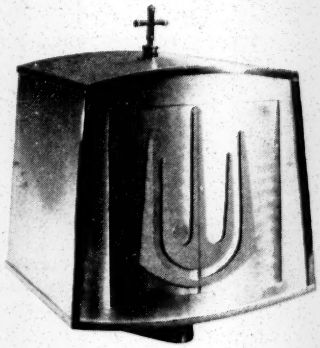

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VOL. CXLIV

JANUARY—JUNE, 1961

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There can be a nagging suspicion that our seminarians are being weighed down with useless knowledge. Would they not be better prepared if the theological content were reduced to the practical matter they will actually use in the confessional and in the pulpit? The time thus saved in the seminary training could be invested in the acquisition of techniques and the development of an open mind toward the spiritual and human realities the priest will encounter in the ministry.

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knowledge cannot be lacking in the legate of the Lord of wisdom;[2] knowledge, according to the principle of faith, must always adorn the Catholic priest;[3] knowledge is required for the fulfillment of the priest's role as *lux mundi* and *sal terrae;*[4] success in the ministry is in exact proportion to the degree of erudition in which knowledge is possessed;[5] no superficial knowledge will suffice here; but it must be possessed "practically on the level of the expert."[6] Even to give instruction to simple minds, deep knowledge is required.[7] When it was urged that the scarcity of priests dictated "realistic" changes, Pius XI answered that: "One well-trained priest is worth many trained badly or scarcely trained at all."[8] When it was urged that the needs of the faithful dictated

[2] Pius XI, *Unigenitus Dei Filius, loc. cit.*

[3] Leo XIII, Encyclical *Fin dal Principio, AER,* XXVIII (1903), p. 326.

[4] St. Pius X, *Haerent Animo.* English text found in: Pierre Veuillot, *The Catholic Priesthood,* Westminster, 1958, I, p. 55. This is an excellent collection of papal statements concerning the priesthood. It will be referred to henceforth simply as "Veuillot."

[5] "As to those who are engaged in teaching or preaching or in the cleansing of souls in the sacrament of penance, or are sent on sacred missions or pursue their ministry in daily familiar intercourse with people, shall not the vigor and efficacy of these manifold activities be in exact proportion to the high degree of erudition with which they are perfected and adorned?" Pius XI, *Unigenitus, loc. cit.*

[6] Although given in 1910, the following exhortation of St. Pius X remains timely: "The very conditions of the present age, which exalts above all the enlightenment and progress of humanity, reveal to us something of the labour which must be devoted to the acquisition of learning in its many and varied departments. A cleric who wishes to exercise his ministry in a manner appropriate to the present time, so as to fruitfully exhort with sound doctrine and refute opponents, and to apply his intellectual resources for the benefit of the Church, must strive to acquire a standard of learning which is above the ordinary and practically on the level of the expert. We must engage in conflict with skillful opponents the elegance of whose studies is combined with a learning which is often fallacious; their specious and rolling phrases are uttered with such flow and thunder that one might think some great novelty is about to burst upon the world. All those who are preparing in the quiet of the seminary for the exercise of the sacred and difficult functions of the priesthood must take timely steps to see that they are equipped with the rich resources of learning." *Sacrorum Antistitum,* Veuillot, I, 81 f.

[7] Pius XII, Discourse to the International Catechetical Congress, Oct. 14, 1950, Veuillot, II, 207.

[8] Pius XI, Encyclical *Ad Catholici Sacerdotii Fastigium,* Veuillot, II, p. 237.

such changes, else parishes would be left without priests to say Mass, this answer was given: "If there is no Mass, then the faithful will be excused from hearing it."[9]

It might be thought that in these statements the Church is insisting upon the highest degree of knowledge in the hope that she would thereby attain at least the basic minimum. Such an interpretation would not be true. These statements not only indicate that the priest must possess a high degree of theological knowledge but they go further in claiming that his success in fulfilling the obligations of his ministry will depend upon the degree of theological knowledge he does possess.[10] These statements are not just useful directives which may be changed tomorrow. The very nature of the priesthood demands that the priest be learned. Pius XII gave a summary statement of this necessity in *Sedes Sapientiae:*

> The priesthood, therefore, calls for a very complete and solid training in ecclesiastical subjects especially; a training which should be capable of nourishing and stabilizing the priest's own spiritual life; a training which will render him immune to any error or deceitful novelty; a training which, moreover, will make of him a faithful dispenser of "the mysteries of God," a perfect man of God "furnished to every good work."[11]

There are three reasons recorded here by Pius XII: 1. The priest must be a "perfect man of God." 2. The priest must nourish and stabilize his own spiritual life. 3. The priest must be immune to any error or deceitful novelty. A consideration of each of these individually will help us to understand just how vital it is for a priest to be well versed in ecclesiastical subjects.

[9] This remark was made by Agostino Cardinal Riboldi and was placed in a discourse prepared by Pius XI shortly before he died. It is mentioned by Gregory Cardinal Meyer in "Some Thoughts on the Role of the Seminary," *National Catholic Educational Association Bulletin,* 1960, p. 77.

[10] Exceptions such as St. John Marie Vianney will occur. However, such can never be the norm for all. Pius XI commented on this very point: "Nevertheless, just as miracles in the order of nature suspend for the moment the activity of the physical laws but do not abrogate them, so too, the achievements of men like these, true living miracles of sanctity, in whom holiness of life makes up for all other requirements, do not in any way take from the truth or the necessity of what We have been saying." *Ad Catholici Sacerdotii Fastigium,* Veuillot, II, 229.

[11] Pius XII, Apostolic Constitution *Sedes Sapientiae,* Catholic University of America Press, p. 9.

A PERFECT MAN OF GOD

The priest as the perfect man of God must be the "light of the world." As Pius XII expressed it: ". . . this is the appointed aim of the Catholic priesthood: to act as the supernatural sun, illuminating the minds of men with the truth of Christ and inflaming their hearts with the love of Christ. To this end and appointed purpose all the preparation and formation of a priest must conform."[12] It is the priest's task to preserve in the world a "sense of the supernatural"—which the world is constantly in danger of losing and which in fact a large segment of our modern world has already lost. It is the task of the priest of Jesus Christ to bring to the world the clear vision of one who sees the proper relationship between man and God. He it is who must withstand all the corrosive elements of human existence and, being made strong himself, must fulfill his role as "steward of the mysteries of God" by dispensing to men the message and the means of salvation.

The priest must be faithful to this sacerdotal function at all times. He is not a priest merely when he sits in the confessional or when he ascends the altar. As sacred as these activities are, it is a woeful error to conceive of preparation for the priesthood simply as the training of good confessors or devout ministers of the altar. The Catholic priesthood stands at the very point of conflict between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan. It is a powerful weapon in the hands of Christ the King in His battle with the kingdom of darkness. The priest fulfills his role as instrument of salvation first of all *in his person.*

Every instrumental cause is effective to the degree that it conforms to the principal cause, so that it specifies and does not hinder the activity of this principal cause. So great is the necessity for the priest to be conformed to Christ that St. Paul could express it in the exalted words: "For me to live is Christ." If the priest is to put on Christ, he must be conformed to the mind of Christ. This cannot be achieved unless his mind is truly changed through the acquisition of theological knowledge. This was expressed by Pius XII in a statement which possesses a deep meaning:

[12] Pius XII, Discourse to the seminarians of the Roman colleges, June 24, 1939, Veuillot, II, p. 22.

All, Professors and students alike, ought to keep in mind that ecclesiastical studies are not merely for intellectual training. They are also intended for a full and solid formation, religious, sacerdotal, and apostolic; they should therefore aim not merely at passing examinations. Their goal is to impress a character, as it were, on the minds of the students, a character, which is never lost, and which, when circumstances call for it, will ever be a source of light and strength to meet their own difficulties and those of others.[13]

All the long years of seminary training are not intended to bring about a change in the seminarian by some sort of mysterious, automatic process. The change is effected through the pursuit of ecclesiastical studies, principally by the attainment of theological knowledge. This change is so profound that Pius XII called it a quasi-character, in virtue of which the student stores up within himself not just knowledge but a "source of light and strength" which will enable him to cope with the difficulties which will inevitably present themselves during his ministry.

Thus the importance of ecclesiastical studies is not measured by what is practical and what is not. By far the most important aspect of all ecclesiastical learning is precisely this change which is effected in the seminarian. He is a success in his intellectual endeavors not to the degree that he has learned much; but to the degree that the enormous amount he must learn, helps him to be a man of God. This cannot be used as reason for turning our classes in theology into spiritual conferences. The teaching of Sacred Theology must be done in a strictly scientific manner. The immediate objective must be the attainment of theological knowledge. But the knowledge thus attained cannot leave the individual unaffected. If after his course in theology, he views reality much the same as he did before, his course has been a failure. No "character" has been impressed upon his mind. It is this which makes him a perfect man of God. It is this which brings about a transformation in the person—in a way analagous to the character impressed upon him by Sacred Orders. Techniques, abilities, all of these can bring mechanical activity. They cannot form a priest *unless the man is changed*. Only the full and solid formation which ecclesiastical studies are meant to impart can accomplish this.

[13] Pius XII, *Sedes Sapientiae*, p. 11.

This is the reason why the Church insists so rigidly upon theological excellence. This is why seminarians are reminded repeatedly that the obligation of attaining theological knowledge is personal to them. This is why priests are exhorted—even commanded—to continue their study throughout their lives. The duty is unpleasant—yet a duty it remains. And if the individual grows weary of hearing this injunction to study, the Church and her appropriate officials can never weary of giving apt and prudent reminders.

Whatever, then, would serve to turn priests away from these injunctions, whatever would make it seem legitimate to give in to the spirit of laziness which constantly seeks to assert itself, whatever would minimize the importance of theological knowledge in the priest, whatever we encounter of this nature is the product of the prudence of the flesh and finds no basis in the priest's role as the perfect man of God.

TO STABILIZE HIS SPIRITUAL LIFE

The priest has been warned by Our Lord that he will be of no use whatsoever unless he preserves his own savor. For the priest is meant to be the "salt of the earth." To this end the pursuit of ecclesiastical studies is most useful. These studies aid in overcoming passion and in uniting the soul to God.[14] They help the individual to overcome laziness which is the mother and mistress of many evils.[15] They are a necessary aid for a fruitful interior life.[16] They are "of the highest value in preserving and fostering the spirit of faith."[17]

It is principally by deepening his faith that these ecclesiastical studies will stabilize the spiritual life of the priest. St. Paul says

[14] Pius XII, Encyclical *Menti Nostrae,* Veuillot, II, p. 190.

[15] Pius XI was very explicit in regard to the good results of earnest study. For example: "For he who enters upon the study of theology addresses himself to a weighty task indeed, and one involving intense labor and heavy inconvenience. It is a task admitting no slothfulness or laziness, which is the mother and mistress of many evils. But the earnest student applying himself wholeheartedly to this truly hard intellectual labor acquires the habit not only of circumspection in judgment and deliberation in act, but represses also and dominates more easily his passions which, if allowed loose rein, grow steadily worse and hurry the soul to the abyss of all vices" *Unigenitus, Review for Religious,* 11 (1952), p. 189.

[16] *Ibid.,* p. 187.

[17] Pius XII, *Menti Nostrae,* Veuillot, II, p. 190.

that "he who is just lives by faith."[18] How true this is of the priest; yet how is he to foster his own spirit of faith without theological knowledge, without a knowledge of the errors particular to the age in which he lives? What else will preserve him from the corruption of naturalism, the allurement of that human prudence which is possessed in such abundance by the children of the world? The priest carries his treasure within his fragile humanity and if he separates himself from theological knowledge, he separates himself from the soul of his priestly sanctity. Nothing else can bring stability to the priest's spiritual life.[19]

It is his faith which gives savor to the priest. And it is theological knowledge which gives maturity to his faith. To one who is aware that he shares the priesthood of the Son of God, that he dispenses the graces of redemption, that he actually looses man from the burden of his sins and really does offer to the Eternal Father a clean oblation, to such a one there can be no regrets, there can be no surrender to the human element which will always remain within him. When the waves of routine turn everything to ashes, when the insistent voice of human ambition calls out to him for satisfaction, it is the faith of the priest which will sustain him and wring from him the assurance: "For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."[20] But if theological knowledge has lapsed into ignorance, then faith may give way to human prudence—and the salt has lost its savor.

There is no need to enmesh oneself in theological subtleties but there is need to rinse oneself continually in the great streams of sacred learning. At the altar, in the confessional, in the pulpit, the priest is constantly in an immediate relation with supernatural powers. It is only his faith which can make him aware of the sublime supernatural atmosphere which surrounds him at such times as truly as Moses was surrounded by the cloud on the summit of Mt. Sinai. Is not the Church robbed whenever the priest becomes unaware of the atmosphere in which he lives and begins to view

[18] *Gal.* 3: 11.
[19] Pius XII, *Sedes Sapientiae,* p. 11.
[20] *Rom.* 8: 38.

himself as a functionary, a technician? Does not such an individual himself remain hungry in the midst of plenty? Does he not run the risk of being dazzled by the hollow brilliance of profane science? It is not at all surprising, then, that Our Holy Father, John XXIII, spoke so strongly to the Roman Synod: "The need of good culture is more than ever evident today. The ignorant and the incapable cannot and must not be ordained priests."[21]

TO BE IMMUNE FROM ERROR

The necessity of theological knowledge becomes even more clear when we consider the priest's obligation to safeguard the faith of his people, to defend them from error, to dispel ignorance. The priest cannot hope to combat error effectively without a thorough knowledge of the solid fundamentals of Catholic philosophy and theology.[22] Very often the priest will be the only defense against error. He must be resolute. He must also be equal to the task. The truth of the Church's claims will often be equated with the priest's ability to defend them. Whenever he is vanquished, the shame is not his alone, but the shame of the whole Church. To many, the priest is the Church.

There is today a deep spiritual anemia stemming from religious ignorance. This ignorance must be "fought, wiped out, beaten. This task belongs primarily to the clergy . . ."[23] Here the priest must

[21] John XXIII, Address given to the second official session of the Roman Synod, January 26, 1960. NCWC translation, p. 10.

[22] Pius XII, *Menti Nostrae*, Veuillot, II, p. 190. Pius XII spoke in the same fashion to the Roman Seminarians in 1939: ". . . zealous priests, intimately convinced of the truth of faith and full of the Spirit of God, are to-day winning greater and more wonderful success in the conquest of souls for Christ than perhaps ever before. If you are to become priests such as these, with the help and after the example of St. Paul, nothing must come before the study of theology, biblical and positive as well as speculative. Let the conviction be stamped deeply on your minds that today the faithful are seeking earnestly for good pastors of souls and learned confessors. Devote yourselves then with pious enthusiasm to the study of moral theology and canon law. Even canon law is directed to the salvation of souls, and by means of all its regulations, and through all its laws it tends primarily to that one purpose, that men may live and die sanctified by the grace of God." Discourse to the seminarians of the Roman colleges, June 24, 1939, Veuillot, II, 25.

[23] Pius XII, Allocution to the men of Italian Catholic Action, Sept. 7, 1947, Veuillot, II, p. 209.

not be a "reed shaken by the wind." He must not be led astray by "the craving for novelty."[24] In stamping out religious ignorance he must impart nothing but the pure doctrine of Jesus Christ. It is this pure doctrine to which he has made a total commitment. So important is it that the priest be himself immune from error, that Pius XII reminded seminary professors of the admonition given by St. Pius X in 1914: "They must ever be mindful that the office of Teacher has not been given them that they might spread their pet theories among their students, but that they might teach them the approved doctrines of the Church."[25] They are not only to teach sound doctrine but to do it so as to bring about a total acceptance and to plant in the hearts of their students a deep, abiding love for the untainted teaching of Christ. Speaking on the fourth centenary of the Gregorian University, Pius XII held up Louis Billot as just such a teacher:

> To those of you who are older, We are happy to recall those professors who, as did Louis Billot—to name one of them—both by excellence of character and keenness of mind, inspired in their students a high esteem for their sacred studies and a great respect and love of the priesthood. Such teachers We are eager to have for the students. . . .[26]

Thus the Church repeatedly takes every care to form in the clergy a soundness of doctrine as well as a "high esteem for their sacred studies." These are needed by the priest that he may be immune to the errors which will circulate about him.

There is a special duty for the priest in this day of widespread newsprint. The individual is engulfed with literature. Much of it is obviously bad and harmful. Much is confusing. Certainly not all of the books which appear today are in conformity with Christian faith. Here the priest must exercise good and proper judgment in regard to himself first of all and then in regard to the faithful. It is not a question here of personal preference. Nor can it ever become a matter of factionalism. What is involved is the preserva-

[24] Pius XII, *Menti Nostrae,* Veuillot, II, p. 197.

[25] Pius XII, *Sedes Sapientiae,* p. 11. (Quoting St. Pius X in his Motu Proprio *Doctoris Angelici* of June 29, 1914.)

[26] Pius XII, Discourse on the occasion of the fourth centenary of the Gregorian University, Oct. 17, 1953. English text: *Irish Ecclesiastical Record,* 84 (1955), p. 129.

tion of the faith of the Christian people and today certainly one obligation of the priest is to inform the people of the worth of the religious literature which is available to them. This need was explicitly mentioned by Pope John XXIII in his address to the Roman Synod:

> But it is equally important to proceed with caution in choosing studies and books, since they are not all good, not all perfect as to conformity with the pure doctrine of the Gospel and with the best-known and safest Christian teaching.
>
> Every good priest must be able to render the most faithful testimony of this teaching. It is by fulfillment of this duty that one measures the good judgment and worth of each. The super-abundance of literary production in every sector of knowledge often becomes a temptation leading to intellectual confusion, to strange and dangerous attitudes, to which the person who lacks experience is exposed and who is easily and quickly led to trust himself.[27]

The Holy Father not only mentioned the need, but also reminded the priest that in fulfilling this duty, he should make use of that powerful instrument of "trust in the teaching, Holy Church when it directs and corrects."[28] Continuing, the Holy Father makes his own the warning which Cardinal Schuster had given to his priests years before: "Personal subjectivism in theology makes heretics; in ascetics it fosters misguided people and in canonical disciplines it creates undisciplined elements; therefore, people who have lost their way in cooperation with the works of God."[29]

Thus the priest cannot bring to his ministry a mind which is so open that it tolerates the circulation of doctrinal error among his people. He is to cure whatever spiritual anemia he finds. He is to be ever vigilant lest his people be confused or led into error by that which they read. The priest cannot hope to perform this necessary task without theological knowledge. The words of Pope John re-echo the words of St. Jerome which Pius XI quoted to the clergy of his day: "Piety without culture profits itself alone, and, however much by personal merit it builds up the Christ's Church, it yet equally harms her by silence in the face of her

[27] John XXIII, *loc. cit.*
[28] *Ibid.*, p. 11.
[29] *Loc. cit.*

adversaries . . . it is the priest's duty to answer whenever the law is called in question."[30]

CONCLUSION

Only deep theological knowledge will enable the priest to be the "light of the world" and the "salt of the earth." This alone will enable him to fulfill the exhortation of St. Paul: "Have this mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus."[31] Nor is it likely that any condition of modern society will lessen this need for theological knowledge, since the Catholic priesthood is immutable.[32] Accidental adjustments will always be required, but at bottom the priesthood remains the same.

It is true to say that the priest must enter his ministry not with a mind that is open, but with a mind that is fixed—fixed by the firmness of his faith and his theological knowledge upon the realities of human existence and of man's relation to his Lord and Saviour. It takes time to effect this fixity of mind in the young man who enters the seminary. It takes study, an enormous amount of study; study which must be pursued in a spirit of faith and not in a spirit of vain, insipid rationalism; study which must be continued throughout his priestly life. The priest, therefore, can ponder long and deeply the prayer of Richard of St. Victor: "Would that each of us would immerse himself in these studies all the day long, until the sun set, until the love of vain things gradually grew weak, until the heat of concupiscence be extinguished and the wisdom of carnal prudence grow cold."[33]

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[30] Pius XI, *Unigenitus, Review for Religious,* 11 (1952), p. 186.

[31] *Phil.* 2: 5.

[32] "Divine in its origin, supernatural in its being, immutable in character, the Catholic priesthood is not an institution which may be accommodated to the inconstancy of opinions and the systems of men." Leo XIII, *Fin dal Principio, AER,* XXVIII (1903), p. 324.

[33] Quoted by Pius XI in *Unigenitus.* Cf. *Review for Religious,* 11 (1952), p. 189.

SEMINARY AND PARISH TRAINING

Commemorating the Third Centenary of the death of Saint Vincent de Paul, the Sacred Congregation of Seminaries and Universities in a letter to the Catholic Episcopate extended the thoughts and remarks on the training of priests which had been set forth in a previous letter occasioned by the Centenary of the Curé of Ars. The recent letter, along with many other salutary suggestions and incisive directives, speaks clearly of the danger to be found in a "policy of haste" in introducing students to the active work of the apostolate.

The seminary is not and never can be a place for testing theories, and still less a training ground for dangerous and compromising activities. It can be nothing other than a home for deep spiritual and intellectual formation. Of course, the future apostolate is and must be a source of inspiration, but any practical experience must come by degrees and only when the student has reached the requisite standard. Such is the mind of the Popes. They are so concerned with keeping the true aim of the seminary intact that they visualize a particular institution with the specific task of initiating the young priests into the various fields of the apostolate. In this way the transition from the quiet of the seminary is brought about naturally, and, with a more adequate preparation in theory and practice, the danger of eventual spiritual unbalance is precluded.

Inasmuch as conditions have not yet, even in Rome, allowed the establishment of a supervised "residency" program for newly ordained priests, it is intriguing to speculate on the possibility of establishing such a program for deacons in a seminary and to consider whether or not such a program would be in keeping with the stand taken by the Sacred Congregation against haste in introducing seminarians to the active life.

There are many ways in which a deacon could prove himself useful to a parish, the question remaining as to the benefit or the harm that full or part-time assistance in parish work would do to his final stage of formation. Place a deacon in a parish for the summer months before his ordination to the priesthood. The companionship of experienced priests with whom he lives in the rectory, the role and authority of the pastor, the hand to hand experience

of parish systems of duty and weekly schedule and the hitherto unknown atmosphere of rectory life will acquaint him with a mode of priestly life not too similar to the seminary life he knows so well. His responsibility to maintain and increase his spiritual life and observe his spiritual exercises, apart from the community spirit of the seminary, will be a major duty in this period of internship.

Numerous opportunities for increasing the strength of his training and aiding the parish priests are open to the deacon on summer assignment to a parish. Commissioned by ordination to preach, he could deliver a sermon on Sundays in the summer. Until that time he has preached to the synthetic congregation of his classmates. The attention and interest of a parish congregation would bring out of him the potential preacher as no seminary audience would do. In like manner, as an ordained deacon, he could officiate at a Baptism supervised by a priest and thus learn the exact steps in conducting this ceremony. He will acquire the information necessary for the proper handling of parents, godparents and child more clearly than he could ever acquire it from a textbook or from the rehearsal of a ceremony.

Stemming from his rank by ordination is the privilege of touching the Sacred Host, enabling him to assist the priests in distributing Holy Communion, making him personally aware of the way to give Communion to young and old, to those with mouths open or partially closed, tongues extended or withdrawn. He would not be able to give Communion to many without realizing the love and dedication of the laity to the Eucharist and himself mirror more than before this spirit.

Available as a catechist the deacon might be sent around to instruct the handicapped children of the parish in their homes. If the pastor conducts a vacation school, the deacon obviously can serve as a teacher or a supervisor of the children. Even the instruction of a convert, under the supervision of a priest, offers a field for apostolic experience for the deacon of this hypothetical summer plan. Should he err slightly in any of these duties correction would be more successfully given and even more readily received as a deacon than as an ordained priest. Another opportunity for him in the parish is to lead the congregation in participation in the Mass.

The instruction and supervision of altar-boys, during the summer a simpler task than at other times, offers a field of contribution to

the parish and of experience for the deacon. At the altar himself, acting as deacon or subdeacon at solemn funerals, functioning as master of ceremonies at a "one-priest funeral" as undertakers describe the requiem high Mass, the deacon learns the exsequial ceremonies. The solemn festive ceremonies with which he is familiar in the seminary are not a full and complete preparation for the funeral ceremonies.

A further avenue for parish work for the deacon is the rather pedestrian function of staffing the rectory office where he could issue Mass cards, make appointments for weddings and anniversary Masses and answer the telephone. Some rudimentary counselling of delinquent youths could be entrusted to him. By witnessing a nuptial Mass, the preparatory rehearsal for the wedding and inspecting the actual papers made out for the couple invaluable experience in the administration of the marriage law of the Church would be gained. Visits to the aged parishioners in their homes, tours of the nursing homes in the parish and calls at the local hospital could provide him with experience in this Christlike life. If he were able to accompany the priest on a sick call he could witness the anointing of the dying, assist with the prayers and gain from this experience invaluable lessons for personal and professional benefit.

To propose so ambitious a program for the deacon is to risk criticism that the deacon's development might suffer from this exposure to the world of the parish. However if the deacon spends his summer at his parents' home, going to morning Mass in lay fashion, making a private visit during the day, occupying himself through the long summer days with reading and visits to relatives and friends, it would seem as formidable a task, if not indeed more formidable, to maintain his stage of development at home. Stationed in a parish, absorbed in duties of the ministry, learning by doing, applying in practice the theories of the classroom, witnessing the fortitude of the people of Christ, continuing his interior life in a parish setting, the deacon ought to profit spiritually.

Suppose that the summer internship were extended into the months of the final year of seminary training. Let the deacons not needed for Sunday ceremonies take on weekend assignments in parishes, assignments to parishes large and small that all might taste the different flavor of city, suburban and rural parishes. In

addition to the experiences of the summer round of activities, further stages of training and formation would be available. Forty Hours devotion in the parish would enable every deacon to participate in the observance of this Eucharistic event, participating as major ministers rather than as processional spectators. The Holy Week liturgy could be extended to all the deacons by arranging for their assistance in parishes in the neighborhood of the seminary. Here again from the role of the spectator the deacon would find himself an intimate part of the renewal of the Passion and Death of the Lord.

Arriving at a recory on a Friday afternoon the deacon of our hypothetical internship program finds on the schedule a wedding rehearsal, a wake, a youth activity either athletic or social in nature and a meeting of a parish committee. Any one of these welcomes him as a visitor. Saturday morning offers him the opportunity to distribute Holy Communion, to witness a nuptial Mass or to take part in a funeral. If he accompanies the priest to the grave he will see and hear the role of the priest at this time. Saturday afternoon he may stay in the office while the priests are in the confessional. Altar boy lists, parish bulletin, minor clerical duties and making out records (all to be double-checked for accuracy) can occupy these hours of his parish day.

If summer Sundays found the deacon useful, the remainder of the year would certainly find his presence most welcome on Sundays. One or more of these functions are in his range: to preach, to lead the dialog Mass, read Epistle and Gospel, to assist in the blessing of a mother after childbirth, to supervise the Mass servers, to look in on the Sunday school classes, to count money, to take part in sung Mass. Given his youth and enthusiasm, the priests of the parish would find their own effectiveness extended and intensified by their younger colleague.

Returning to the seminary after the summer assignment or after the weekend, the deacons would apply themselves to pastoral, dogmatic and moral theology with a clearer realization of the importance and complexity of the parish ministry. Their office would mean far more to them at the time and ever after, than if they had little occasion to exercise the diaconate. Any trace of immaturity still discernible could be wiped away by the maturing effect of the experiences they undergo. Rather than expending

time on the design of chalices, holy cards and vestments, they would probably apply themselves to studies, conscious of the immediacy of the theology, law, inspired word of God and liturgy.

Given supervision, careful review of assignments, errors amended and spiritual direction, the deacons would come to their sacerdotal ordination with a richer understanding of the ministry and a more complete training than is now available.

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MODERNISM AND THE TEACHING OF SCHLEIERMACHER

I

The year 1907 brought to a head the difficulty that had been growing within the Catholic Church for a number of decades, a theological approach that came to be described as Modernism. On July 8th of that year, the Holy Office issued the decree *Lamentabili,* condemning these errors; this was followed by the encyclical of Pope St. Pius X, *Pascendi dominici gregis,* of September 8, 1907. The encyclical was a far more detailed statement of the basis upon which Modernism was built. In its many facets, this theological approach involved not only philosophical and theological principles opposed to Catholic faith, but also faulty historical and scriptural theories, and a dangerous application of this entire system to the liturgical and parochial life of the Church. So far-reaching was it in its error that Pius X was moved to describe Modernism as the "synthesis of all heresies."[1]

The chief foundation for all of these errors, however, was the philosophical position adopted. This became the norm for interpreting all the other matters which came under consideration. There were admittedly many important findings made in the field of historical and scriptural studies during the last century, many of them now accepted by the highest authority of the Church today.[2] The precise error of the Modernist view of history and scripture,

[1] Denz. 2105. English translation in *All Things in Christ,* edited by Vincent A. Yzermans (Westminster, Md.: Newman, 1954), p. 117. (Cited hereafter as Yzermans.)

[2] Cf. Pius XII, *Divino afflante Spiritu* (N.C.W.C. edition), par. 18: "It is scarcely necessary to observe that this [textual] criticism, which, some fifty years ago not a few made use of quite arbitrarily and often in such wise that one would say they did so to introduce into the sacred text their own preconceived ideas, today has rules so firmly established and secure, that it has become a most valuable aid to the purer and more accurate editing of the sacred text and that any abuse can easily be discovered."—The same current interest can be noted in regard to the Hebrew mentality and Hebraic forms of literature which, set against the philosophy of the Liberal Protestant in an earlier era, took on a quite different meaning. Cf. *Divino afflante Spiritu,* par. 33 ff.

however, stemmed from the philosophical suppositions which became the norm for all such interpretation. Scientific data in the field of history, archaeology, biblical criticism, and the like remain nothing but inert data until an interpretation is given to these facts, and there are many different, even diametrically opposed, ways of interpreting the evidence on hand. For the Modernist the sole backdrop against which all data could be set was nothing but the philosophical system endorsed at the very start.

Failure to realize this fact still raises confusion in the minds of some who view Modernism as a condemned system, and yet see certain historical or scriptural data used by the Modernists now being accepted by Catholics; they immediately conclude that the Catholic Church is making concessions to Modernism. Nothing of this sort happens at all. The use of the findings of historical and scriptural study by Catholic theologians today does not imply at all the prior acceptance of this all-pervading philosophical approach which was the foundation and guiding norm of all Modernist interpretations. This makes all the difference in the world. The data in itself is rather neutral; it was the Modernist interpretation of it that made the conclusions wrong and brought about the strong condemnation of the Modernist system under Pius X. At that time the philosophical assumptions and the data were so closely joined together in the Modernist interpretation that the condemnation of the entire system might seem to imply the condemnation of the data itself or of the valid work of scholarship. Nothing could be farther from the truth. The Modernist interpretation of the data is what was condemned, along with the false philosophical system that determined that interpretation; the Church was not condemning the scientifically and historically proved data itself.

As Pius X points out, everything in Modernism was guided by its philosophical norms; it was an *a priori* system from start to finish. Thus when the Modernists came to deal with history this soon became apparent:

> Some Modernists, devoted to historical studies, seem to be deeply anxious not to be taken for philosophers. About philosophy they profess to know nothing whatever, and in this they display remarkable astuteness, for they are particularly desirous not to be suspected of any prepossession in favor of philosophical theories which would lay them open to the charge of not being, as they call it, *objective*. And yet the

truth is that their history and their criticism are saturated with their philosophy, and that their historic-critical conclusions are the natural outcome of their philosophical principles.[3]

The same thing is true of the Modernist approach to Scripture: "As history takes its conclusions from philosophy, so too [biblical] criticism takes its conclusions from history."[4] Accordingly, the biblical critic will presuppose a distinction between "real history" and the "history of faith," and the resulting distinction between the "Christ of history" and the "Christ of faith." Thus "the critic, on the data furnished him by the historian, makes two parts of all his documents."[5]

Even here, however, philosophy has a more direct influence on the biblical critic, for "the dominion of philosophy over history does not end here. Given that division, of which We have spoken, of the documents into two parts, the philosopher steps in again with his dogma of *vital immanence,* and shows how everything in the history of the Church is to be explained by *vital emanation.*"[6] There is a constant harking back to the basic philosophical positions that serve as the constant guide of all Modernist thought. The end result is described by Pius X in these words:

> This done, he finishes his work by drawing up a history of the development in its broad lines. The critic follows and fits in the rest of the documents. He sets himself to write. The history is finished. Now We ask here: Who is the author of this history? The historian? The critic? Assuredly neither of these but the philosopher. From beginning to end everyhing in it is *a priori* and an apriorism that reeks of heresy.[7]

To complete the picture, we must note that "the Modernist apologist depends in two ways on the philosopher."[8] He begins by working with history as "dictated . . . by the philosopher," and he adopts as his own the immanentist and purely psychological methods of the philosopher.[9] The entire scheme of apologetics is

[3] Denz. 2096. (Yzermans, p. 109.)
[4] Denz. 2097. (Yzermans, p. 111.)
[5] *Ibid.*
[6] Denz. 2098. (Yzermans, p. 111.)
[7] Denz. 2099. (Yzermans, p. 112.)
[8] Denz. 2101. (Yzermans, p. 113.)
[9] Denz. 2101. (Yzermans, p. 114.)

to be built on these principles which are, in fact, nothing more than "an *a priori* assumption of agnostic and evolutionist philosophy. . . ."[10]

WHAT IS THIS PHILOSOPHY?

In the opening paragraphs of *Pascendi* the type of philosophy of which Pius X is speaking is sketched in clear and definable lines. The starting point is the Kantian philosophy which so dominated the philosophical thought of Europe in the nineteenth century; it is designated by the name of *Agnosticism* in the encyclical:

> We begin, then, with the philosopher. Modernists place the foundation of religious philosophy in that doctrine which is commonly called *Agnosticism.* According to this teaching human reason is confined entirely within the field of *phenomena,* that is to say, to things that appear, and in the manner in which they appear: it has neither the right nor the power to overstep these limits. Hence it is incapable of lifting itself up to God, and of recognizing His existence, even by means of visible things.[11]

This is the basic position of Kantian philosophy; it served as the negative aspect of the philosophy of Modernism. Added to this, however, was a positive element, introduced more by his disciples than by Kant himself, although he certainly laid the seed for such a further development: namely, the concept of "vital immanence." As Pius X explains, once the negative aspects of this system have been admitted the explanation of religion, whether natural or supernatural, "will be sought in vain outside of man himself. It must, therefore, be looked for *in* man; and since religion is a form of life, the explanation must certainly be found in the life of man. In this way is formulated the principle of *religious immanence.*"[12] Religion is portrayed as an "inner sense," originating in a deeply rooted "need of the divine" in man.

It is in this inner sense that the Modernist finds revelation; all creeds and religious formulas are, accordingly, nothing but further reflections on this inner experience of the individual (or community), and the expression of these reflections in various formulas.

[10] *Ibid.*
[11] Denz. 2072. (Yzermans, p. 91.)
[12] Denz. 2074. (Yzermans, p. 92.)

The purpose of these creeds and formulas is "to furnish the believer with a means of giving to himself an account of his faith."[13] As a result of this, these creeds have only a relative value; "it is quite impossible to maintain that they absolutely contain the truth."[14] Since the religious experience of individuals and communities can change, it is obvious that creeds and "the formulas which we call dogma must be subject to these vicissitudes, and are, therefore, liable to change. Thus the way is open to the intrinsic *evolution* of dogma."[15] The formulas "in order to be living, should be, and should remain, adapted to the faith and to him who believes. Wherefore, if for any reason this adaptation should cease to exist, [these formulas] lose their first meaning and accordingly need to be changed."[16]

All of this remains equally true of the work of the Modernist as a theologian, for in this realm "the Modernist theologian takes exactly the same principles which we have seen employed by the Modernist philosopher—the principles of *immanence* and *symbolism*—and applies them to the believer."[17] The Catholic Modernist was interested in applying this philosophical system to Catholic doctrine, so that his efforts involve something more than a mere repetition of a philosophical position; but the philosophy remains his fundamental norm and guide throughout. It is in the light of these principles that the Modernist goes on to evaluate the Church, the sacraments, Scripture and tradition. Modernism within the Catholic Church was not identical with Liberal Protestantism of the late nineteenth century, since it included this added attempt to combine in some fashion both the principles of Liberal Protestantism and the traditional notions of Catholic faith. Modernism, however, very obviously derived its inspiration from the teaching of Liberal Protestantism, in which its own position was deeply rooted.

What the Modernist attempted to do was doomed to failure from the start; it was an attempt to do the impossible. The ultimate reason for this was the philosophy upon which the entire movement was based and which served as a guide throughout. It is a philosophy opposed on almost every point to the undying principles

[13] Denz. 2079. (Yzermans, p. 95.)
[14] *Ibid.*
[15] Denz. 2079. (Yzermans, p. 96.)
[16] Denz. 2080. (Yzermans, p. 96.)
[17] Denz. 2087. (Yzermans, p. 101.)

associated with Catholic faith. It replaces objectivity with subjectivity and unchanging truth with temporary verities. Once this philosophical position was accepted as the norm for discussing Catholic faith, everything was to be uprooted, and even the data resulting from valid historical and scriptural research was to be falsely interpreted. Thus it was not against scientific research as such that *Pascendi* spoke out, but rather this faulty interpretation of it brought about by the ruinous philosophy which pervaded the entire Modernist system.

SOURCE OF THIS PHILOSOPHY

The sources of Modernism are so varied that it is difficult to single out one isolated example as the basis of everything, but in regard to the philosophical starting-point, there can be little doubt that it ought to be traced back to Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834). It has been said, and with good reason, that "Schleiermacher and Darwin were probably the two persons most directly responsible for the shaping of modern Protestant religious thought."[18] Schleiermacher contributed above all the notion of *vital immanence* in religion, and Darwin added the concept of *evolution* which spread far beyond the limits of natural science into history, philosophy and religion as well. Insofar as Modernism in the Catholic Church was related to Liberal Protestantism, this same thing may be said, proportionately, of its philosophical sources.

Modern Liberal Protestantism is a post-Kantian form of Protestant life, vastly different from that of the sixteenth-century Reformers, and Schleiermacher is one of the dominant links between this present-day development and the philosophy of Immanuel Kant.[19] It is for this reason that Schleiermacher has

[18] Richard B. Brandt, *The Philosophy of Schleiermacher* (New York: Harper, 1941), pp. 307-308.

[19] It may be noted that the term "Liberalism" has been used in many different senses during the last few centuries. As used in present-day theological circles and as used in *Pascendi* (Denz. 2093; Yzermans, p. 106), it indicates chiefly that type of post-Kantian thought which came to life in the writings of Schleiermacher and similar-minded men. It must be distinguished from the current use of the word "Liberal" as distinguished from a so-called "Conservative," and also from the "Liberalism" spoken of by Newman in his early work, *Lectures on the Prophetical Office of the Church* (1837). In this work of Newman, "Liberalism" refers more properly to Deism or eighteenth-century Rationalism rather than the type of philosophic

come to be called the father of modern liberal theology.[20] What Schleiermacher did was to extend the immanentist qualities of Kant's thought to the entire field of religion. If man was to find God within himself after Kant, it was also in himself that Schleiermacher would have him find the essence of *all* religion—or at least in the communal conscience that he came to attribute to the Christian community.

The Fathers at First Vatican Council were already concerned over the immanentist philosophy of Schleiermacher and its emphasis upon a religious sense and the need of the divine. The *Adnotationes* to the first *Schema* on Catholic doctrine proposed to the Council contain a direct reference to Schleiermacher's works.[21] Little did they realize the even greater impact these teachings would have on the life and history of the Church in the thirty years following the First Vatican by their influence on the principles of Modernism.

There is an acknowledged difficulty in determining whether Schleiermacher was properly more of a philosopher or a theologian, or a curious mixture of the two. Felix Flückiger begins his study of Schleiermacher with a discussion of this precise point.[22] There is no question that a very close relationship exists between Schleiermacher's philosophical and theological views; the center of discussion concerns chiefly the *degree* to which his theology has been influenced by his philosophy, and the extent that the two can be separated. Involved in this question is the more basic problem of whether Schleiermacher actually reduced religious experience to the philosophical and purely natural level, or whether his starting point was a truly Christian experience as he conceived it, springing from man's confrontation with the self-manifestation of God.

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thought discussed in the *Pascendi*. This same use of the term as indicating deistic Rationalism is to be found in Romuald A. Dibble, S.D.S.: *John Henry Newman: The Concept of Infallible Doctrinal Authority* (Washington, D. C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1955).

[20] Cf. John Dillenberger and Claude Welch, *Protestant Christianity* (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1954), p. 182; John T. McNeill, *The History and Character of Calvinism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954), p. 406.

[21] *Collectio Lacensis: Acta et decreta sacrorum conciliorum recentiorum* (Friburgi: Herder, 1890), VII, 528,d (note 2).

[22] Felix Flückiger, *Philosophie und Theologie bei Schleiermacher* (Zollikon-Zürich: Evangelischer Verlag, 1947), p. 9.

Flückiger divides the various opinions into three groups: (1) Some hold that Schleiermacher's theology is nothing more than an extension or deepening of his philosophical views. This would, in effect, reduce his theology—and his grasp of Christian faith—to a purely natural, philosophical experience. (2) Others say that not everything of Christianity was abandoned in his system, but only that which could not be brought into accord with his philosophy. (3) Still others contend that there is nothing more than a similarity between his philosophical and his theological views, so that the "religious feeling" of which Schleiermacher speaks is formally distinct in the Christian context from that which might be attributed to any mere philosophical notion of religion in general. In its deepest roots this may, indeed, be the same "feeling," but in the Christian it is something proper and distinct, a response to the unique Christian revelation; it could not occur under any other circumstance.[23]

This last view may well add greater insights into current appraisal of Schleiermacher's position. He was above all a theologian and a preacher. As a Protestant clergyman, he was attempting to save Protestant Christianity from the evils he saw associated with it in his day. He was particularly concerned over the apparent conflict between the claims of traditional religion and the results of scientific and philosophic study such as it was portrayed in his time. As Brandt notes:

> There are many assertions which Christians have become accustomed to make [Schleiermacher] says, which it is important for them to get on without—such as the statements about creation, miracles, the Mosaic chronology, and so on. For these statements conflict with reliable scientific knowledge, and, he says, it would be scandalous if religion were to ally itself only with a crude and unsound science, while reliable scientists were forced by the unnecessary claims of religion to ally themselves with the irreligious elements of society. Schleiermacher seems particularly to have felt the sting of the results of the (at that time) new internal criticism of the Bible. All these facts, he thinks, have the effect of putting the religious man in a dilemma and of forcing him to find a way of reconciling his two legitimate interests.[24]

Schleiermacher's solution to this problem facing the Christian grew out of his general theory on the essence of religion; that

[23] Flückiger, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-17; 174 ff. [24] Brandt, *op. cit.*, p. 261.

may be granted. It may not be a correct estimate of his views, however, to say that he reduced all religion to a common denominator, making all of them nothing more than rather arbitrary expressions of the same, identical "experience." Many of his statements appear to contradict such an analysis. He considers Christianity as the most perfect expression of religious experience, and he does so in a way as to indicate some objective norm proper to Christianity itself, distinct from the individual. Moreover, he claims that no one would admit "that Christian piety could anywhere arise, as it were of itself, quite apart from any historical connexion with the impulse which proceeded from Christ."[25] Christ definitely enters into the formation of Christianity. Schleiermacher views Mohammedan and Jewish piety in much the same fashion as Christianity, it is true, but he always insists that the highest development of religious piety is to be found in Christianity "and thus in the most perfect form (which we may say in advance is Christianity) the inward peculiarity [of a particular faith] must be most intimately bound up with that which forms the historical basis of the outward unity."[26]

The overtones of this approach may well reflect the spirit that came to more complete expression in later existentialistic theology among Protestants, with its emphasis upon the personal reaction (of the individual or the community) to the historic fact of Christ. In one of his letters, Schleiermacher explains the root of religious experience as he understands it, foreshadowing this later approach: ". . . what I understand by pious feeling does not at all come from representations, but is the original expression of an immediate existential relation."[27] The "feeling" which results from this experience is basic, primary, fundamental; whatever thought content or religious formula may be associated with it would result only from a reflection on that experience.

LIFE AND TIMES

In order to understand the position of Schleiermacher, it is most important to view him in the historical situation in which his

[25] Friedrich D. E. Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, trans. by Mackintosh and Steward (Edinburgh: Clark, 1928), p. 44 (No. 10, 1).

[26] *Ibid.*, p. 45.

[27] Schleiermacher, *Werke*, Part One, II, 586: in Brandt, *op. cit.*, p. 280.

approach developed. It has been pointed out by those who have studied him in detail that, while such an historical view is necessary for evaluating any philosopher, it is doubly necessary in regard to Schleiermacher. Any attempt to study merely his "ideas," apart from the spirit of the time which helped formulate them, will lead only to serious misunderstandings.[28]

Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher was born in Breslau on November 21, 1768; he died on February 12, 1834. He was the child of Moravian parents, and was raised in the strict moral atmosphere of this pietistic group. He eventually entered the seminary at Barby, at that time the University of the Moravian Brethren; he was seventeen at the time. Schleiermacher continued to receive here the type of training approved by the Brethren, but he also set about a private study of current philosophical questions. This brought him into contact with the first dominant influence in his academic development: the philosophy of Immanuel Kant.

Schleiermacher was at this time won over almost entirely by the new critical philosophy of Kant, and he soon found that he was in serious conflict with the religious beliefs and attitudes of the Moravian seminary. Finally, in 1787, after overcoming the bitter opposition of his father, he entered the University of Halle—at that time enjoying the height of its fame, and almost entirely dominated by the spirit of the Enlightenment. He remained there until 1789, studying philosophy. He became more and more acquainted with the discussions of that day concerning Kant, as well as those which debated the merits of the Leibniz-Wolff school of thought. He also did some work in translating parts of Aristotle, indicative of a lasting interest in Greek philosophy that later brought forth other translations from the works of Plato.

After a year of study and writing at Drossen, he passed the church examination in theology, and in October of 1790 accepted a position as tutor in the household of Count Dohna of Schlobitten; he remained there until 1793. These seem to have been years of great skepticism in the life of Schleiermacher; the acceptance of the Kantian position had all but destroyed his belief. The contact with this cultured family also deeply influenced his appreciation

[28] Cf. Flückiger, *op. cit.*, p. 184; Brandt, *op. cit.*, pp. 4-5.

of a more liberal and free manner of life, considerably different from that which he had known as a child of Moravian parents.

In 1793, Schleiermacher set out for other labors. He taught for a time in a boys' school, and then served at a church in Landsberg for two years. But in 1796 he moved to Berlin as a chaplain of the Reformed Church, where he remained for six years. This assignment was to bring about the second great influence in his philosophical career: namely, his contact with the leaders of the Romantic Movement, especially with Friedrich Schlegel (with whom he shared rooms for a time) and Henriette Herz.

Due to a number of problems in which he became involved (both through his writings and because of an unfortunate affair with a married woman), Schleiermacher was more or less forced to accept a position in Stolpe in Pommerania; this was in 1802. After two unhappy years there, however, he returned to Halle as extraordinary professor in theology and university preacher. His work there was interrupted by the Napoleonic war in the winter of 1806-07. In the summer of 1807 he was back in Berlin, giving lectures on the history of Greek philosophy; in autumn of that year, he moved to Berlin permanently, where he remained until his death in 1834. In 1808 he was appointed preacher at the Trinity Church in Berlin, where he became famous as a noteworthy preacher; in 1810 he was appointed professor on the theological faculty, being then forty-two years of age. He lived out his life in Berlin, interested not only in philosophy and theology, but also taking an active part in political questions and in the organization of ecclesiastical affairs.

HIS PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

The first important work produced by Schleiermacher on the philosophy of religion appeared in 1799, during his first stay at Berlin. It was published anonymously, but the name of its author was soon widely known: *On Religion: Discourses Addressed to its Cultured Despisers.* It was one of his most notable works.

The "cultured despisers," in this instance, were his new friends of the Romantic Movement in Berlin. Schleiermacher was beginning to formulate his own position in the debates of the era, and it was to be a unique position, differing greatly both from that

of the eighteenth century Rationalists and Deists and from that of the Romanticists.

The Deists and their natural, purely rationalistic religion had sought to work out the conflict between faith and reason—between Rationalism and Christianity—by reducing religion to certain essential elements that could be defended by reason alone. These essentials were chiefly moral principles and a few very general statements concerning God. Kant had entered the picture and attempted to preserve Christianity from this attack while still accepting the basic tenets of Deism. Kant attempted to overcome this spirit of the Enlightenment, but he was, at the same time, trying to overcome himself. His deistic religious views could not preserve what was then considered "traditional" Christian belief among German Protestants; the Deists, no less than the Rationalists, had in effect rejected all such orthodox belief.

Kant attempted to found religion on a moral or ethical basis (much as the other Deists before him had done). This approach was never entirely acceptable to Schleiermacher, even though he was won over in general to the Kantian spirit. As time went on, he grew more and more dissatisfied with this mentality; he did not wish to join forces with the Deists. Thus his original acceptance of Kant's position came to be modified by a new approach towards the preservation of Christianity. It is important to note that he did not actually reject the teaching of Kant in regard to such matters as proofs for the existence of God by reason. He had little regard, it would seem, for the cosmological and teleological proofs as outlined by Kant; he rejected them for much the same reason. On the other hand, Schleiermacher did make some efforts at formulating certain arguments for God's existence that may have been closer to the ontological proof. At any rate, he frequently came close to Pantheism in his system, and these arguments generally ran along this line.[29]

What Schleiermacher did reject in Kant was above all his attempt to place the essence of religion in the *ethical* order. He chose to follow Kant's position in the *Critique of Pure Reason* (rather than the *Critique of Practical Reason*), and therefore posited, in effect, some sort of *a priori* category proper to religion;

[29] Cf. Brandt, *op. cit.*, pp. 217 ff.

in this would its essence lie. As Dillenberger-Welch note: "For Schleiermacher, religion itself was a unique realm of experience, related to but not determined by knowledge or ethics. Only in this way could Protestant theology begin again."[30]

Following this general line of thought, Schleiermacher felt that he could criticize *both* sides of this discussion, and for much the same reason. Both the leaders of the Enlightenment and those of the Romantic Movement were making the same mistake. They all looked upon religion as a way of thinking or as a set of beliefs and a moral code. The Romanticists had reacted against both the cold intellectualism of the Enlightenment and the vigorous moralism of Kant and Fichte. In place of these approaches they proposed an idealized concept of the free man, a notion that came close to a rather pantheistic doctrine involved in their praise of the "divinity" of human nature. Yet their position still remained tied in some way to beliefs or codes of action.

As a result, Schleiermacher begins his discourses to these "culture despisers" by asking first of all the most general question:

> Let us then, I pray you, examine whence exactly religion has its rise. Is it from some clear intuition, or from some vague thought? Is it from the different kinds and sects of religion found in history, or from some general idea which you have perhaps conceived arbitrarily.[31]

Schleiermacher rejects the view that religion is derived from different sects, insisting that the concept of religion is far more profound than that. He notes that the Romanticists still view religion from this aspect; they consider the general religious teaching of the various churches, and then reject those two doctrines above all that they find in all religions and to which they object: providence and immortality. These they consider the hinges of all the traditional religions, but the Romanticists themselves feel that these doctrines must be cast aside, and a more personal, subjective basis for religion established.

By acting in this manner, Schleiermacher insists, the Romanticists are also wrong. Like the philosophers of the Enlightenment,

[30] Dillenberger-Welch, *op. cit.*, p. 159.

[31] Friedrich D. E. Schleiermacher, *On Religion: Speeches to its Cultured Despisers*, trans. by John Oman (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1893), pp. 12-13.

they have mistakenly identified religion with a set of beliefs, with doctrines, or with a certain ethical code. Actually, something more is needed than an emphasis upon the subjective and personal as opposed to the objective and intellectual elements of religion. In its very essence, according to Schleiermacher, religion is neither metaphysics nor ethics nor a combination of the two; in this lies the common error of the Romanticists and the leaders of the Enlightenment. For Schleiermacher, religion is something far deeper, something unique in man's experience. Instead of approaching the heart, the essence of religion, the Romanticists, like the philosophers of the Enlightenment, have started with a consideration of what is most apparent, i.e., the beliefs of the various sects:

> You start with the outside, with the opinions, dogmas and usages, in which every religion is presented. They always return to providence and immortality. For these externals you have sought an inward and original source in vain. Wherefore religion generally can be nothing but an empty pretense which, like a murky and oppressive atmosphere, has enshrouded part of the truth. Doubtless this is your genuine opinion.[32]

Before going on to "despise" religion, therefore, Schleiermacher suggests that his friends of the Romantic Movement ought first of all ask if they themselves have ever properly grasped what religion actually is. He grants, from his own point of view, that there have been many different sects, many religions "from the senseless fables of wanton peoples to the most refined Deism, from the rude superstition of human sacrifice to the ill-put together fragments of metaphysics and ethics now called purified Christianity. . . ."[33] And he agrees with the Romanticists when they say that all of these are "without rhyme or reason."[34] On this point, he claims, there is no argument between them. All of these various sects and doctrines, however, must be looked upon only as the external manifestations of religion; in its very essence, religion is something far different. None of these systems, theories, analyses represent the true character of religion, but since the Romanticists—like the leaders of the Enlightenment—have consid-

[32] *Ibid.*, p. 14.
[33] *Ibid.*
[34] *Ibid.*

ered *only* these elements, they also "do not yet know religion itself."[35] Hence what they "despise" is not religion at all, but only these external elements which they have mistakenly identified with religion itself.

BASIS OF SCHLEIERMACHER'S SYSTEM

In this we find the kernel of Schleiermacher's religious thought, such as it was to develop in later years, above all in two works: *Kurze Darstellung des Theologischen Studiums* (1811, 1830), and *Der christliche Glaube nach den Grundsätzen der evangelischen Kirche* (1821, 1830)—translated as *The Christian Faith*. Schleiermacher thus asks his readers to turn "from everything usually reckoned religion, and fix your regard on the inward emotions and dispositions. . . . You must transport yourselves into the interior of a pious soul and seek to understand its inspiration."[36] He will not attempt to defend religion by the argument that it maintains justice and order in the world, nor will he emphasize doctrines or the weakness of man and his need of God's directing strength. Others follow this line of argument, but he will not; to do so would mean making the same mistake they have made.

In his Second Speech, Schleiermacher concerns himself directly with the true nature of religion as he sees it. If religion is neither "a way of *thinking*, a faith, a peculiar way of contemplating the world," nor "a way of *acting*, a peculiar desire and love, a special kind of conduct and character," what precisely is it?[37] "Piety cannot," he insists, "be an instinct craving for a mess of metaphysical and ethical crumbs."[38] All of these outward appearances and formulas are merely *secondary* elements of religion itself:

> Religion never appears quite pure. Its outward form is ever determined by something else. Our task first is to exhibit its true nature, and not to assume off-hand, as you seem to do, that the outward form and the true nature are the same.[39]

True religion is something that rests deep within the heart of man; it is this contemplation of the Infinite, which is neither knowledge nor science, but an experience in which God is perceived:

[35] *Ibid.*, p. 15.
[36] *Ibid.*, p. 18.
[37] *Ibid.*, p. 27. (Italics ours.)
[38] *Ibid.*, p. 31.
[39] *Ibid.*, p. 33.

It is true that religion is essentially contemplative. . . . But this contemplation is not turned, as your knowledge of nature is, to the existence of a finite thing, combined with and opposed to another finite thing. . . . The contemplation of the pious is the immediate consciousness of the universal existence of all finite things, in and through the Infinite, and of all temporal things in and through the Eternal. Religion is to seek this and find it in all that lives and moves, in all growth and change, in all doing and suffering. It is to have life and to know life in immediate feeling, only as such an existence in the Infinite and Eternal.[40]

As he goes on to explain, this religion is not knowledge and science, either of the world or of God. Without being knowledge, true religion recognizes knowledge and science, but *in itself,* it is essentially an affection—a revelation of the Infinite in the finite, God being seen in it and it in God. The same thing is true of ethics. The pious man contemplates God's activity among men and sees the meaning of ethics, but he does not formulate any ethical system.

It is important to note that at this time of his philosophical development, Schleiermacher continued to include two elements in his complete notion of true religion: Intuition and Feeling. Later on, in those works which most represent his influence upon modern thought, he dropped the notion of Intuition (which had overtones of an intellectual grasp of faith and an objective belief), and emphasized only feeling. This Intuition of which he is now speaking, however, is not perception. As Schleiermacher understands it, Intuition involves a more personal, immediate influence of one thing upon another:

All intuition proceeds from the influence of the thing perceived on the person perceiving. . . . What is perceived is not the nature of things, but their action upon us, and what is known or believed of this nature is beyond the range of intuition. . . . Religion neither seeks like metaphysics to determine and explain the nature of the Universe, nor like morals to advance and perfect the Universe by the power of freedom and the divine will of man. It is neither thinking nor acting, but intuition and feeling.[41]

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[40] *Ibid.*, p. 36.
[41] *Ibid.* (1st edition), in the Oman edition, pp. 278, 277.

The basic principles of Kantian phenomenology can be recognized in this statement, joined to Schleiermacher's notion of religion as something entirely beyond the outwardly perceptible. In his later works, and in the second edition of the discourses *On Religion,* Schleiermacher, for various reasons, set aside this element of Intuition in his concept of religion. He had reworked his concept of science, and Intuition was now also rather important there. At the same time, he may have wished by that time to avoid confusion with the "intellectual intuition" proposed by Schelling, with whom he now disagreed.[42]

This is one of the reasons why it is so difficult to analyze the position of Schleiermacher; he was constantly progressing towards a newer, more explicit formulation of what he was thinking in general, although he never set forth a fully worked-out system such as we might desire. By a peculiar trick of fate, this may be the reason for his profound influence on modern religious thought in Protestantism and in Catholic Modernism. Had he perfected a system, any acceptance of his concepts would have been conditioned by an acceptance of his system. As it was, the concepts he proposed were able to be assimilated in various ways by rather diverse schools of thought, and thus Schleiermacher gave the impulse to equally diverse systems. As Brandt expresses it: "Being vague, his idea was elastic and adaptable. Had he carried through a rigorous analysis of his concepts of 'feeling' and religious experience, it is quite possible that the idea would have proved less powerful."[43]

Schleiermacher did attempt to explain what he meant by "feeling" (*das Gefühl*), however inadequate were his efforts. In his earlier concern with intuition and feeling, he held that each intuition is, from its very nature, linked to a feeling. Once he had transferred this notion of intuition to the realm of science or knowledge in general, making it a part of his epistemological system, he redefined religion in terms of feeling alone; this was from about 1806 on. This meant, in effect, that his religious views, and his concept of religious belief, became increasingly *subjective,* since this concept of intuition—vague as it was—had implied some contact with an objective religious truth. As Oman notes:

[42] Cf. Brandt, *op. cit.*, pp. 155, 175 ff.
[43] Brandt, *op. cit.*, p. 313.

In 1806 he stood opposed to an entirely different state of matters.... Schleiermacher solved the difficulty by saying that one part of the mind can take the other for its object. Thus the mind can make its feelings the object of its thought, and doctrines arise. Religious *ideas* are reflections on religious *feeling*. This is the conception he works out in the *Glaubenslehre* [*The Christian Faith*].[44]

It is this notion of religion, dating from his later period, that has come to be associated with the name of Schleiermacher, and which has become the starting-point for so many modern systems of religious thought, including the Modernism condemned by Pius X. It sets aside intuition and is identified with "feeling" alone, not an emotional or psychological feeling, but "an immediate conscious state, the result of an interaction between the individual and his environment, a mirroring of the effect of that interaction on the individual, its enhancing or depressing his life in a specific way; and feeling is either pleasant or unpleasant in tone."[45]

There can be, of course, feelings of this nature that are not religious; for Schleiermacher, religion is simply one species of a genus.[46] On a purely philosophical basis, all mankind finds God on the basis of this feeling of *absolute dependency*. In this, Schleiermacher remains an intuitivist. When man perceives himself as a dependent being, as a part of the Whole, he at once achieves certitude; he needs no further reasoning process, no further proof.[47] In this idea of the Whole, the individual perceives God, the Cause of all things.

In the Christian, however, there is question of a further, unique experience. The dogmatic statements which pertain to that belief are a result of the reflection on the *Christian* consciousness, rather than merely this primal feeling of absolute dependency on God, common to all mankind. The Christian consciousness is that associated with the experience of redemption in Christ; it could not be experienced in any other situation. It might be called the highest and most profound experience with the feeling of absolute dependence on God, but, while this feeling might be somewhat vague and

[44] Oman, "Introduction" to his translation of *On Religion*, p. xliii. (Italics ours.)

[45] Brandt, *op. cit.*, p. 179.

[46] *Ibid.*, p. 180.

[47] Flückiger, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

misty apart from Christian revelation, it is clear and domineering in this experience, strong enough to exclude all hint of shadow and hesitancy.[48]

All of this is the work of the Spirit, and this working finds expression simultaneously in "revelation" and in the devout, Christian "consciousness." Schleiermacher understands this term "consciousness" more in a metaphysical than in a psychological sense.[49] It is that which places man in contact with God; hence it is, in the Christian, that which places man in contact with God through Christian revelation. The same Spirit that was active in Christ is also active now in the devout Christian, and the heightened activity of this Spirit that is apparent in the Christian church and which unites all Christians in a common feeling of holiness actually *constitutes,* for us, the Christian revelation. "Just as the self-consciousness of Christ was a revelation of God in him," writes Flückiger in his interpretation of Schleiermacher, "so is the Christian, devout, self-consciousness a revelation of God in us."[50] The Spirit is the same in all instances, but in the Christian, this heightened activity of the Spirit progresses *only* under the impulse of the preaching of Christ; apart from this preaching, there might be religious activity of the Spirit, but never that activity proper to the Christian. The work of the Spirit in the Christian is necessarily linked to the preaching of Christ. Thus there is a necessary *identity* between the self-consciousness of Christ and that of the Church. It is necessarily a question only of *one* revelation, being manifested in both Christ and His Church. The Christian message, therefore, is really the preaching of the self-consciousness of Christ, which is, necessarily, that of the Christian community as well.

Because of this, there is, in Schleiermacher's view, an essential link between Christ and Christianity. His theology is not a purely rational, philosophical outgrowth; it is something associated *only* with Christ, and it is the working of the one Holy Spirit. Thus Schleiermacher can write:

> No true Christian can wish to retain anything in his inner life, and at work there, in which he does not recognize Christ; so, too, no one

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[48] *Ibid.*, p. 126.
[49] *Ibid.*, p. 128.
[50] *Ibid.*, p. 125.

can wish, in his self-communication within the Christian fellowship, to commend and disseminate himself and his own things, but rather Christ alone and whatever of Christ lives in him. Similarly, no one can wish to take up anything into his life for self-advancement, save as he takes it from Christ.[51]

If one accepts the philosophical and theological principles adopted by Schleiermacher, all of this does make sense, and his "Christian faith" might be called truly "Christian." But only if one accepts his philosophical position. As he views it, Christianity is something that could never occur apart from the impulse given by Christ, but every statement of this nature must be understood in the philosophic categories in which he himself labored. Otherwise, we miss the meaning of Schleiermacher entirely.

Modern-day Protestantism has rejected much of Schleiermacher's approach, but one basic element has continued to exercise its influence. As Dillenberger-Welch point out:

> Even his sharpest critics are one with Schleiermacher in the recognization that God and faith belong together. We cannot speak significantly about God from a neutral corner. We know him only as we meet him in a venture of trust and obedience, i.e. as we respond in faith to his forgiving and liberating work in Christ.[52]

It is important to note that it is the philosophic basis of this approach to Christian revelation that makes all the difference in the meaning of these same words. A Catholic might say this same thing about man's relationship to God, but he would necessarily mean something greatly different from what Schleiermacher meant to say, or from what a large number of present-day Protestant theologians intend. Again, a Pelagian might also describe Christianity as a "response in faith" to the activity of God, but mean nothing more than man's totally independent and natural activity in the way of salvation. Man's response to revelation is still a response under grace. God retains the initiative, or else we again lapse at once into Pelagianism.

All of these basic principles concerning the nature of religion came to be applied in a particular manner in Schleiermacher's later work concerning the teaching of Christianity: *The Christian Faith.*

[51] Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, p. 612 (No. 133, 1).
[52] Dillenberger-Welch, *op. cit.*, p. 189.

It is in this further application that we will note the impact of Schleiermacher's thought upon Liberal Protestantism and on Catholic Modernism as well.

(To be continued)

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FIFTY YEARS AGO

The leading article in *The American Ecclesiastical Review* for June, 1911, entitled "The Work of the Holy Name Society in America," is contributed by Fr. C. H. McKenna, O.P. The author gives a brief account of the history of the Society, stretching back to 1274, and explains the manner in which it functions in a parish. He states that during the first three months of 1911 one hundred and sixteen pastors throughout the United States "have applied and have established in their churches the Holy Name Society." . . . A lengthy article entitled "Preparation for Pulpit Preachers," by Fr. Claude Pernin, S.J., stresses the importance of preparing properly for the office of preaching the word of God, and particularly the benefit derived from a thorough knowledge of the Sacred Scriptures. . . . Fr. B. Feeney, continuing his series on seminary studies, writes on "Ascetic Theology in the Seminary." He states: "The tendency never to delay absolution (on the part of a seminarian's confessor) is practically as well as theoretically unjustifiable." . . . A Latin article by Fr. A. Schmitt, S.J., of Innsbruch, declares that vasectomy directly intended to deprive a man of the power to procreate is illicit, whether it be done by private or by public authority. . . . Another article on this same subject, by Dr. A. O'Malley, of Philadelphia, proposes the opinion that vasectomy can have a directly beneficial effect, the quieting of one who is emotionally disturbed; hence, it can sometimes be allowed on the principle of the double effect. (I do not believe that at the present day such a direct effect is ascribed to the operation of vasectomy by doctors or psychiatrists; hence, the argument of Dr. O'Malley must be regarded as unsound.) . . . An anonymous writer suggests that in place of flowers as a tribute to a deceased person a scroll be given with the promise of having Masses offered. (Perhaps this was the beginning of the commendable custom of a "Mass card" instead of flowers for a wake.) . . . Several correspondents express their desire to have evening Masses and a mitigated form of the eucharistic fast.

F. J. C.

THE DEFINITION OF SERVILE WORK

The subject matter of this paper is servile work, i.e., the concept or definition of servile work. Time and again we priests are asked in the confessional, and outside, if a certain work or occupation is forbidden on Sunday; and keeping in mind that which we had learned while we were in the Seminary, we give an answer, usually hedgingly, hesitatingly, especially if the problem proposed is rather novel to us. Then, too, in our Catholic newspapers and periodicals priest-writers often give contradictory answers, thus making the matter very confusing. The aim of this paper is to arrive at a definition of servile work, although it is not expected that the definition will be a clear-cut answer to every problem.

Of course, there is a grave precept of the Church to abstain from servile work on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation. The word "servile," the moral textbooks tell us, comes from "servus"—slave, servant or serf. In this sense, servile work meant the daily work done by these people, work which usually involved bodily effort. In the first five centuries of Christianity, however, there was no agreement, nor any Church legislation forbidding such work. The Jewish converts, accepting the first day of the week as the Lord's Day, still retained the rigid practices of the old Sabbath which forbade different kinds of work. But, converts from the Gentile nations began murmuring and objecting to the Jewish practices. Even St. Paul got into the argument, fighting strenuously for the Gentile converts. St. Paul's argument was not simply for the abolition of the Sabbath practices; it was more comprehensive. His defense was that the redemption of Christ freed man not only from sin, but also from the yoke of the Mosaic law—from the observance of dietary laws, circumcision, Jewish festivals: all these he called "weak and beggarly elements," "shadows of the future," figures of the reality that have come in Christ. St. Paul's argument prevailed, at least to the extent that the Gentile converts were not subjected to the Jewish practices, although most of the Jewish converts still clung to the practices of the Old Testament.

During those first five centuries, Sunday was regarded by all as a spiritual day, concentrated on the Eucharistic celebration and people were admonished to abstain from distracting and worldly

occupations which would hinder attendance at divine worship. It is of interest to note that St. Jerome speaks of a certain convent in Jerusalem where the nuns, after attending the liturgical services on Sunday, would return home to the convent and would then apply themselves diligently the rest of the day in making clothes for themselves and also in making clothes which would be sold to others. But, as time went on, many bishops under Judaizing influence became more inclined towards Sabbatical practices and here and there we see conciliar decrees appear urging and even obliging the people to these Sabbatical practices. Gradually, there arose an established custom forbidding certain kinds of work on Sunday. During the Thomistic era we see the great Doctor state the question thus: "Observantia diei dominicae succedit in nova lege observatiae sabbati, non ex vi praecepti legis, sed ex consuetundine populi Christiani."[1] By this St. Thomas means that the details of Sunday observance derive from the power of law which the Church accords to legitimate custom and practice. When some contemporaries of St. Thomas reproached him of following the old Jewish ceremonial in this matter, the Doctor replied: it was not so; he was simply following the established, legal custom.

Perhaps it would be worthwhile to state briefly what the present day canonists say about *custom*. The popular notion of custom is: custom means an habitual use of work as generally practiced by law-abiding Catholics. Canon 29 says: "Consuetudo est optima legum interpres." Since we are concerned now with custom governing servile work, it is a question of that custom or "consuetudo *praeter* legem," because there is no written definition by the Church of servile work. The ability of a locality for introducing legal custom derives from the fact that canonical approbation has been accorded to collectivity, v.g., a nation, a diocese. Does this also apply to a parish? Canonists are sharply divided in adjudging the capacity of a parish to introduce legal custom. Among those who favor this opinion, just to mention a few, are: Capello,[2] Beste,[3] Vermeersch-Creusen,[4] Van Hove,[5] Regatillo.[6] The opinion may be

[1] *Summa theologica*, II[a]-II[ae], q. 122, a. 4, ad 4.
[2] Cf. *Summa iuris canonici*, I, 89.
[3] Cf. *Introductio in codicem*, p. 95.
[4] Cf. *Epitome*, I, 131.
[5] Cf. *De consuetudine*, p. 80.
[6] Cf. *Institutiones iuris canonici*, I, 80.

regarded as solidly probable. However, canon law states that custom must be in force for forty years before it becomes legal custom. Moreover, it does not follow that because some few individuals have been acting so in a certain locality, custom has been established. The people as a whole in the particular locality must have the same understanding. To base the definition of servile work on anything other than established custom, one will be confronted with insurmountable difficulties.

An example of a law coming from *universal custom,* outside of servile work, could be cited: for instance, the obligation of priests to recite the Breviary. Before the present Code was promulgated, there was no written law of the Church prescribing this obligation; but, all priests felt bound in conscience to recite the Divine Office because of universal custom. For *local custom,* an example that can be used is the one mentioned by Henry Davis, S.J., in his *Moral Theology.* In Wales, he says, in some villages, it is permitted on Fridays to eat gulls, ducks, teal, coot, and other water-fowl. The villagers in these places clung tenaciously to this practice and the local bishops, for various reasons, prudently kept silent. Finally, a legal custom was established: now it is an established local custom to permit these people to eat on Friday that which for us would be regarded as meat, viz., food forbidden on days of abstinence.

A few centuries after St. Thomas there arose a multitude of moral theologians and manualists who, with few exceptions, continued this traditional teaching that the definition of servile work is founded on legal custom. Led by Busembaum (whose textbook went through over two hundred editions), they insisted on custom: universal or local custom. They distinguished between the nature of work, "natura vel finis operis," and the intention or purpose of the worker, "finis operantis." They also had another distinction, namely: what is strictly servile work and work that is liberal or artistic. The following were listed as strictly servile works:

to plough,
to dig,
to sow,
to gather harvest,
to cultivate plants,

to so such manual work as cementing, carpentry, iron and steel work,
to tailor,
to wash or sew clothes,
to make shoes,
to work in mines or factories,
to paint or plaster a ceiling, walls, etc.
to load a wagon,
to do general housecleaning,
to fish with nets as a commercial enterprise.

In general, all such work is to be considered servile, no matter what the "finis operantis" may be; be it done for pleasure or recreation, or even if no pay is taken. In all these cases it is the character of the work that determines its nature, i.e., whether it is service or not. However, all these authors admit that in all cases we must be guided by legitimate custom. In some instances, because of legitimate custom, the notion or distinction between "finis operantis" and "finis operis" must be disregarded.

Some works were considered liberal or artistic and do not come under prohibited work; or, they are regarded mainly as skillful occupation; for example: writing, typing, artistic painting, hunting, flycasting or fishing (even if the fish is sold). Crocheting and embroidery are also generally admitted to be artistic work. When objection is made that the distinction between servile and artistic work operates against the financial interests of manual laborers and favors the more cultured classes, such as: painters, writers, musicians, etc., the only adequate answer is that we are not concerned with what the law should be, but with what it actually is.

To give a few examples or problems: (perhaps the explanation of these cases will not meet with the approval of everyone, but they seem consistent with what was said previously).

When the writer was a seminarian in Rome, attending classes at the Gregorian, Father Vermeersch said that in some places, haircutting (barbering) was considered as an artistic work, and therefore not prohibited. Perhaps; but I think the reason why barbershops are kept open in those localities is because of necessity. People living in rural districts, where there were no tonsorial parlors, only had the opportunity to get a haircut on Sunday when they came to Mass in a more populated area.

Not seldom a question is asked if *knitting* is permissible on Sunday, v.g., a sweater, gloves, socks. I would say *no,* for it is equivalent to sewing: making clothes on Sunday, unless there is an established custom and then it could be regarded as an innocent pastime. But the very fact that people ask about knitting indicates that there does not seem to be a general understanding that it is licit.

Recently in an American Catholic periodical a popular theologian, treating the question of *general washing* on Sunday, when an electric machine is used, said: the woman would be guilty insofar as she herself did any work, such as gathering the clothes, taking them out, etc. But since the machine is not subject to the laws of the Church, the washing itself is not under prohibition. It seems to me, if this is so, a farmer could plow a field on Sunday using a tractor: he could argue he is simply riding on the machine, i.e., the tractor. Or, a man using a powermower, sitting on it, could trim the whole golf course or a field. In the common understanding such work is considered servile. Therefore, the whole work of general washing, even when an electric machine is used, should be considered "per modum unius"; that good Catholics look upon it as contrary to custom, to "sensus fidelium," to what is proper and befitting on the Lord's Day. We should not insist too much that what is forbidden is the work that requires bodily, muscular effort. A football player exerts much more effort than most servants do in their daily work. It is all a matter of an established custom. And, in connection with this question, we now have various problems about work done by automation. Solution of such problems will depend on the common estimation of the people.

Some few, quoting the words of Jesus, would conclude that what I have been saying so far is completely contrary to Holy Scripture. Jesus made the following pronouncement: "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath." Scriptural commentators say that the remark of the Saviour was primarily to assert His supremacy as God over the positive observance of the Jews, who made the Sabbath an absolutely must, taking precedence over all exceptions. Then again, according to scriptural interpreters, the saying of Jesus implies exceptions to positive law for proportionate reasons. We too say the same: even in the New Dispensation we say that there are general classes of exceptions which

excuse doing servile work, even when contrary to established custom. Such general exceptions are: necessity; considerable public utility; considerable utility for oneself or for the good of another; avoidance of idleness *which would be a proximate occasion of sin;* piety towards God which would require servile work so as to make what is immediately necessary for divine worship.

What does Canon Law say about servile work? C. 1248 says that "servile work and forensic activities must be abstained from; also public markets, fairs and other public buying and selling, unless lawful custom and particular indults bear otherwise." The Code uses "opus servile" but once, but it does not define it. We then have to go to the traditional teaching of canonists and moral theologians for the definition.

A NEW CONCEPT

A surprising number of modern moralists, from many nations, are expressing an opinion which would do away with the traditional criterion of servile work. Some would completely do away with the concept of servile work, others would change that concept. Many of these men are serious, solid scholars who are not simply looking for novelties. We cannot ignore them.

Among these writers I may point to the following, all of whom published on this material during the years 1955 and 1956. In 1955 there were statements by Fr. John R. Connery, S.J., in *Theological Studies,* by Fr. John DeReeper in the English *Jurist,* by Father Geraud in *L'Ami du clergé,* and by Msgr. James Madden in *The Australasian Catholic Record.* The following year there was a study by Robert Kekeisen in the Denver *Register* for June 24.

The new concept was urged for these reasons: (1) Because the Church, outside of local councils, never defined the meaning of servile work; (2) because during the first five centuries the practice among Christians was different; (3) because the traditional concept was taken from the Jewish ceremonial law; (4) because very many people act contrary to the traditional concept and still do not feel they are sinning; (5) because times have changed, and mere positive law should be according to the needs and abilities of the people. In medieval and premedieval times servile work was identified mostly with rural work. We are now living in an industrial, mechanical age. Is it necessary to identify mechanical

work with rural work? (6) we are establishing new Christian communities in foreign fields. Must we oblige and burden the new Christians with the old concept of forbidden work? After all, these people have different customs.

APPRAISAL OF THE NEW CONCEPT

No priest has the right to change the meaning of servile work, which is regarded as such by legitimate custom. It is lawful, however (and perhaps a good thing), to advocate a change. But, if there are so many writers and moralists who are calling for a change, do they not constitute at least an extrinsic probable opinion? I think *not,* for even these authors themselves use expressions, such as: "it seems to me," "I think," "the law should be," etc. If an individual priest, from the kindness of his heart, makes a definite statement contrary to the existent law, he is exceeding his authority and misleading the people.

Similarly previous to the change made by American Ordinaries of the rules of ecclesiastical fast, there were famous authorities who advocated a change to the relative norm, v.g., Bucceroni Vermeersch, Sabetti-Barret, Noldin, Tanquerey and others. Still no one in effect said it was licit to follow the relative norm, abandoning the traditional absolute norm. In the same way, regarding servile work, it is licit to join the bandwagon of those who clamor for a change; but the change can be made only by rightful Church authority. However, since Canon Law has always recognized the value of custom as an interpreter of the law, if custom, contrary to existing practice, is rightfully established, this also can be regarded as a legitimate change in the law.

RECAPITULATION AND CONCLUSION

Generally Christians observed the Lord's Day as a day of worship and a day of rest. The conviction that certain occupations were wrong on the holy day came spontaneously from a deep religious instinct. A moral obligation in this matter was recognized by many even long before a legal obligation was established. This legal obligation arose and is now in force through custom. We hear some priests tell people that it is lawful to occupy themselves at certain work that is regarded as servile and they excuse this on the plea that after all this is only for recreation's sake. This

is not the point; the work is either servile or not. (In individual cases there may be an excusing, extrinsic reason for allowing the work.) Also, even granting that the work in question may come from the old Sabbatical observance: still, if legal custom makes it servile, it is servile! Therefore, the only and complete definition that can be given at the present moment should be expressed something like this: we are bound to abstain from those works which, in the sound judgment and custom of good Catholics, are regarded as forbidden. In some instances the custom is universal throughout the Church; in other cases local customs differ, but if observed by a religious Catholic community, it may be followed in conscience. However, it is not always easy, especially for a priest who is new in a locality, to know what is the legal custom. Can we say that this question is disputed, i.e., the definition of servile work? I would definitely answer *no;* but it is misunderstood by not a few for various reasons. What is said in textbooks about "natura operis" and "finis operantis," also the distinction between manual and liberal works, is not always applicable. Therefore, to conclude, unless the legislator decrees otherwise, in judging servile work we must always keep in mind the established or legal custom.

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PRIESTLY MEDITATION AND THEOLOGY

Two months ago, according to the Russian military authorities, a man made a trip around the world at a height of about two hundred miles above the surface of the earth, and completed that flight in less than two hours. That fabulous exploit is considered and always will be considered as a justification and glorification of all the studies and all the bodies of knowledge that went into its preparation and accomplishment. Here was a feat that was undreamed of only a few years ago, and it was brought about by the use of natural forces which were studied and applied as they never had been before.

In the light of this space flight, and all the other technical and scientific wonders of our generation, the content of Catholic theology may appear old and obsolescent. But it will appear such only to the unbeliever and to the uninstructed. The truths we study in sacred theology can and will actually lead us to triumphs in comparison with which everything that has come and which can come from the study of the natural science can only be called insignificant.

Sacred theology is the science of the faith. If we accept God's supernatural revelation with the assent of divine faith, and if we obey the commands contained in and connected with this revealed message, then inevitably and most certainly we shall rise from the dead on the last day, glorious and immortal after the image of Our Lord Jesus Christ. The bodies which will have crumbled into dust, and which not all the power discoverable through the studies of natural sciences until the end of time could ever revivify, will live again, reanimated by our own souls. And for all eternity we shall have ineffable happiness in the possession and enjoyment, not merely of the greatest treasures and powers of the created universe, but of the God who brought that universe into being, who has kept it in existence and in operation all through the course of the ages. And we shall possess and enjoy God, not only in the way in which he can be known naturally by all the intellectual creatures He has fashioned, but in the way in which He knows and possesses and enjoys Himself, understanding Him in the unity of His divine essence and in the trinity of His divine Persons.

Ultimately of course this possession and enjoyment of God, which is a loving and supernatural understanding of Him, constitutes God's own external glory, the very good for which the entire created universe, in all of its richness and perfection, was brought into being to attain. The purpose for which the farthest away stellar galaxies were created, for which every atom and sub-atomic particle in the universe was fashioned, is achieved, as God wills that it should be achieved, in and through the body of truth which, by God's power, we accept as certain with the assent of divine faith, and which we investigate and understand in the science of sacred theology.[1] Definitely then Catholic theology is not and cannot be obsolescent. It is not rendered old fashioned in comparison with the wonders to which men have become accustomed through the study of the natural sciences. As a matter of fact, a consideration of these wonders of the natural order should be, and indeed must be, an occasion for a reawakening of our appreciation of the richness of the body of truth set forth in the science of the Catholic faith.

Such a comparative study is at least morally requisite for the great body of the faithful in our own days. Like the men of every other generation, we are subject to the danger that we may consider the truths of the Catholic faith and of Catholic theology as something less than spectacular merely by reason of the fact that we have grown accustomed to them. The very fact that we and the world around us have grown so enthusiastic about the magnificent attainments of natural science and technology gives us an opportunity to see the truths of the Catholic faith and of Catholic theology in a better and a more proper perspective.

Inevitably a more perfect grasp of the truths of Catholic theology should bring with it a more effective performance of those acts which are understandable only in the light of divine faith. Thus, for example, since our attachment and loyalty to the true Church, our administration and reception of the sacraments, and our worship of God are intelligible only in terms of the divinely revealed truths

[1] The same truths which we believe in faith are those which we shall understand in the Beatific Vision. Faith is, according to the Epistle to the Hebrews (10:1): "the substance of the things to be hoped for, the evidence of things that appear not." See St. Thomas Aquinas, the *Summa theologica*, IIa-IIae, q. 4, a. 1.

which we hold as certain on the authority of God who has revealed them, a more vital appreciation of these truths should surely result in a stronger affection for God's kingdom on earth, in a better administration of the sacraments, and in an increase of fervor in the practice of the true religion of Jesus Christ. If we, the priests and the teachers of the Catholic Church, take advantage of the opportunity that has been given us by the appearance in our day of these marvels of natural science and technology, we can contribute to a definite increase in the perfection of the service of God within His Church. We can help ourselves and our brothers in Christ to know Him and to love Him better than He would have been known and loved otherwise.

Quite obviously, however, we shall bring about no such good result unless we ourselves first take steps to refresh and strengthen our own appreciation of the body of supernatural revealed truth. Moreover it should likewise be rather clear that we shall do nothing except in the measure that we desire and pray to accomplish this great work for Our Lord. Apart from prayer our ministry will be barren, even in this day of outstanding graces for the Church of God. We ourselves must pray, and we must take every step to see to it that our own prayer is as enlightened and as effective as we can make it. Consequently it is definitely our business to renew our own application to the practice of meditation.

As a man grows old in the priesthood, and as he remembers a great number of priestly conversations on the subject of meditation, it becomes apparent that far too many priests think of meditation as a kind of adjunct to spiritual reading. Too few of them see that meditation is meant to be definitely a part of the process of prayer itself, and that meditation can be most effective in the development of our spiritual lives only when it is treated precisely as a part of prayer, and when it is enlightened by sacred theology.

In years past there was sometimes rather serious confusion in spiritual literature, and some people were brought to imagine that there was a "prayer of petition" in some way less perfect and less desirable than a "prayer of adoration" or some other kind of prayer. As a matter of fact prayer is defined as the raising of the mind to God or the petition of fitting things from God.[2] It is the act by

[2] This is the standard scholastic definition of prayer. It was first set down by St. John Damascene in his *Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, book 3,

which we employ the practical intellect in the worship of God. When Our Lord was instructing His disciples He told them: "Thus therefore shall you pray."[3] And the formula He gave them was the Our Father, a series of seven petitions which is and always will remain the central prayer of God's supernatural kingdom on earth according to the dispensation of the New Testament.[4] Petition, then, is definitely not some lower form of prayer fit only for the beginners in the spiritual life. It is the prayer which was not only recommended but commanded by Our Lord Himself. And it must not be forgotten that this process of petition of fitting things from God is the act in which we use our practical intellects to give the service of religion to God.[5] Prayer is essentially an act of worship or religion.

Now there are certain definite facts about prayer which we must take into serious account before we can begin to reap the benefits which we should derive from it and from the practice of meditation as a part of prayer. The first of these is the truth that prayer, under the proper conditions, is unfailingly efficacious. If we pray properly, that is petitioning for ourselves things that are requisite for the attainment of the Beatific Vision, and asking them in a pious and persevering way, then inevitably our prayer will attain its object.[6] And if we pray piously and perseveringly for the accomplishment of any purpose which we consider to be advantageous to God's glory, that prayer will undoubtedly produce its effect, even though the effect may very well be something incomparably superior to the individual good we have petitioned from God.

In other words it has actually pleased God to constitute our prayer, the prayer of those who wish to honor Him as the disciples and members of His Son, a genuine cause of the benefits He bestows upon those for whom Our Lord died. He has deigned to make our prayer, true Christian prayer, a secondary but still eminently

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c. 24. Cf. Fenton, *The Theology of Prayer* (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1939), pp. 1-15.

[3] *Matt.*, 6:9.

[4] Cf. *Summa theologica*, IIa-IIae, q. 83, a. 9. The *Pater noster* stands in the common of the Mass to show that it sums up all the petitions made to God in the prayer of this sacrifice.

[5] Cf. *Summa theologica*, IIa-IIae, q. 83, a. 3.

[6] Cf. Fenton, *The Theology of Prayer*, pp. 210 ff.

real cause of His glory, of the ultimate good for which the entire created universe was brought into being and has been kept in existence and in operation. According to His revealed message, communicated to His people through His Son, there are benefits which He will actually give to men and which would not have been given if they had not been sought from Him in the process of prayer. The act of prayer, the petition of fitting things from God, is one of the real and one of the most important and necessary forces for good in all the universe. And it is none the less real because it is something within the supernatural order.

Now it is quite obvious that any priest can and must petition God for the proper and successful accomplishment of his own sacerdotal mission. Prayer to God for this objective will necessarily be infallibly efficacious when it is offered piously and with perseverance. And, although it would be quite possible for God to grant the favor sought in this prayer even when the prayer itself might be somewhat remiss, it would still be presumptuous and highly unreasonable for a priest to imagine that his career as a servant of the living God could be successful and effective apart from a genuinely pious and persevering prayer for this objective on his own part. And it is here that the necessity for meditation becomes most apparent.

Meditation, properly speaking, should be considered as an integral part of prayer.[7] When we pray properly and devoutly, we must meditate.

In order to understand this highly important truth, we must realize that prayer is definitely an act of the virtue of religion.[8] It is not a process in any way implying an anthropomorphic concept

[7] Cf. *Summa theologica,* IIa-IIae, q. 83, a. 17. Here St. Thomas, in accordance with the text of *I Tim.,* 2:1, lists "obsecrationes, orationes, postulationes, et gratiarum actiones" as parts of prayer. His explanation of this division is one of the most important scholastic teachings on the spiritual life. In the light of this division, meditation would belong to the process of *oratio,* considered not as prayer itself, but as that part of prayer which we ordinarily call "mental prayer." In the previous question (IIa-IIae, q. 82, a. 3), St. Thomas shows that meditation is a cause of devotion, which, as the primary act of religion, must be considered to be the basic motive of prayer.

[8] Cf. *Summa theologica,* IIa-IIae, q. 83, a. 3; Fenton, *The Theology of Prayer,* pp. 70-77.

of God. When a man prays, it should be quite evident that he does not act to bring his needs or his desires to the attention of the living God. He is quite well aware of the fact that God knows his needs and his desires far better than he knows them himself. The intimate nature of prayer as an act of religion is expressed in the truth that, in petitioning God for what he needs and what he desires to have and to see accomplished, a man is giving the most effective expression of his acknowledgment that God is the supreme Source of all good, the First Cause and the Last End upon which all created reality and benefit depend. We pay our debt of acknowledgment to God, venerating Him as the Supreme Good, when we petition Him for what we hope to obtain as blessings in this world and in the next. There can be no more effective way of professing God's supreme excellence and our complete dependence on Him than by asking Him for the things we need to have and want to have in order to live properly as His adopted children in Christ.

But with this essentially religious orientation of the act of Christian prayer there comes another aspect of primary importance. As the petition of fitting things from God, prayer is necessarily a kind of chart of the Christian life. The man who prays properly and with perseverance comes to realize clearly what he is actually seeking in this life and in the next.[9] And, despite the manifold scientific accomplishments of this era, or perhaps to a certain extent because of them, it is not always very easy to know and to recognize one's real ultimate objective with certainty.

At the very outset, then, a man has to think, and to think hard, about the One to whom he is addressing his petition, and also about what it is that he asks from the Lord and Creator of all things. It would be definitely insulting to God to speak to Him other than in a reverent and becoming manner, without a proper acknowledgment of who He is and what we are in ourselves and in His sight. And, quite frankly, a man cannot thus petition God unless he goes to the trouble to learn what he can about the nature

[9] "Sed oratio ad obtinendum a Deo est homini necessaria propter seipsum qui orat, ut scilicet ipsemet suos defectus consideret, et animum suum flectat ad ferventer et pie desiderandum quod orando sperat obtinere: per hoc enim ad recipiendum idoneus redditur" (St. Thomas Aquinas, *Compendium theologiae*, 1. 2, c. 2).

and the attributes of God, and about what He has revealed about the Trinity of His Persons and about the Incarnation. And a man cannot pray properly and with perseverance unless he works, as well as he can under the circumstances of the time and the situation, to recall that body of truth when he is offering his humble prayer to God.

Furthermore, a man certainly would be guilty of folly, and would definitely not be performing an act of religion, if he came before God asking for something which, in the last analysis, he did not really want. It is quite obvious that, when the priest prays, his one essential objective is the glorification of God through the attainment of his own salvation, which he hopes to have as a good priest. For this one thing is certain: the man who is signed with the character of Our Lord's priesthood has only two alternatives facing him. For all eternity he will have been either a successful and holy priest or a failure in the priesthood. Thus it is absolutely necessary that he should really desire to be a good and a worthy priest.

This may seem like a mere platitude, but definitely it is not. Certainly anyone who was ever ordained to the priesthood would have liked to have been a good priest under what might be called ideal circumstances, but takes charity and devotion to intend to do the work of the priesthood well in the actual circumstances in which the individual priest finds himself. There are always difficulties to be overcome, difficulties which may be much greater in one case than in another, but which nevertheless face each individual in the performance of the work God calls on him to accomplish within His priesthood. It is only when a man takes time out to think of the One to whom he is speaking in the act of prayer, and applies himself to consider what it is that he really wants here and now through the practice of prayer, that his petition to God can have the effectiveness it should possess. And this is precisely one of the basic tasks of priestly meditation.

In his treatment on prayer, which, incidentally, is one of the most useful parts of the entire *Summa theologica,* St. Thomas Aquinas takes cognizance of the fact that there are four distinct parts of prayer.[10] First, of course, there is the actual raising of

[10] Cf. *Summa theologica,* IIa-IIae, q. 83, a. 17; Fenton, *The Theology of Prayer,* pp. 216-32.

the mind to God, the work of addressing oneself to the Lord and Creator of the universe, to the one whom we, as the disciples and the members of Jesus Christ, are privileged to call "Our Father." Then there is the petition itself, the request made to God for some good which, according to the light of divine faith, is necessary for or at least appears to be conducive to His eternal glory and our own eternal salvation.

Then, because God has willed that we should pray, not to procure any benefit to Himself, but for our good, the act of prayer properly so called should involve a recognition of the reason why we can hope to have our petitions answered by God. This reason is twofold. First of all there is the cause of our salvation which is to be found in the passion, the death, and the resurrection of Our Lord. So it is that in the liturgical prayers of the Catholic Church, which are models on which the prayers of the individual Christians should be constructed, offer a petition to God which we ask that He grant to us "through Jesus Christ Our Lord." And then there is our own gratitude. A man shows himself as genuinely offering the service of prayer to God only when he makes it clear that he is grateful for the benefits God has already lavished on him and on his family in Christ. Prayer is essentially an act of petition. And there can be no such thing as an effective petition which does not contain an expression of gratitude for the gifts which have previously been accepted from the one to whom the petition is made.

The function of priestly meditation, when we consider it adequately, is definable in terms of all of these four parts of prayer. Primarily and basically meditation is the consideration of the majesty, the wisdom, and the goodness and mercy of God to whom the man who prays offers his petition. But integrally the concept of meditation takes in the examination of the favors sought from God, not merely in the abstract, but as they affect the worshipper here and now, and an attempt to realize the favors God has done for us in the past, as well as the redemptive work of Christ, in virtue of which alone it is possible to have our petitions granted by God. The priestly life of meditation is the work of bringing together all of these four parts of the act of Christian prayer. And thus our meditation can be and definitely should be a force effective and necessary for the accomplishment of the most important work

of the universe, the work of the Church, which is the work of the priesthood in the Church.

Seen for what it is, a part of the process of Christian prayer, meditation is obviously and necessarily an intensely personal thing. The factor that dominates meditation is the petition addressed to God in the act of prayer. And that petition is the expression of a desire, or, to put it more accurately, the expression of our Christian hope, enlightened by divine and Catholic faith, and animated by Christian charity. Basically that petition must contain, equivalently at least, the *"fiat voluntas tua"* of the Lord's Prayer. And, if it be the statement of a real petition to God, it is the manifestation of a really effective act of the will, of an intention rather than of a velleity.

A man who prays to God for the grace to be a good priest is necessarily praying to be a good priest in the particular circumstances in which he is placed here and now. It is always very easy to imagine what wonders we could work for the cause of the Catholic religion were we situated in some position other than that which we actually occupy. But, on the other hand, it is very difficult indeed to come to grips with reality and to face what God actually demands of us in the very difficult position in which each one of us is actually placed by Our Lord. For each one of us, being a good priest necessarily involves a rectification of our own personal lives of prayer and devotion, and it also clearly demands a scrupulous carrying out of the duties of our own individual positions.[11] And, in the last analysis, it is only when the rectification of the priest's personal devotional life and the proper performance of his sacerdotal ministry in the position to which he is assigned in the Church are examined in the light of the ultimate objective of Christian prayer, and in terms of the favors God has given us and of the redemptive death of Christ Himself, that a priest will be able properly to take cognizance of the way in which he is

[11] The entire theology of Christian prayer involves the truth that no disciple of Christ can ever be satisfied with what he is doing in Our Lord's service at any given time. There is no such thing in this world as the attainment of a spiritual status which is so perfect as to preclude the possibility and the desirability of an advance in the strength of our faith and the intensity of our charity, which would necessarily bring with them a more perfect performance of the work we are called upon to do for Our Lord.

called upon to improve the quality of his spiritual life and the carrying out of his priestly duty.

Thus essentially meditation, as a part of the process of Christian prayer, is definitely a personal thing. It is quite clearly something which, at least in its entirety, cannot be taken out of any book. No formula worked out by another man can ever completely take care of the needs of any individual practicing the act of meditation.

Each one of us has his own difficulties to overcome, both in the line of individual sanctity and in the line of the performance of his sacerdotal ministry. And it is only through the practice of meditation that we shall recognize these difficulties, and the faults of which we have been guilty, together with the deficiencies with which our lives and our ministries are threatened. Furthermore, it is only in and through the process of prayer, into which meditation is rightly integrated, that we shall find the light and the strength to perfect our lives and our works for Christ in the people of God.

On the other hand, however, meditation must always be basically theological. We definitely cannot meditate properly unless we take cognizance of the fact that we are addressing a petition to the Lord God of heaven and earth, the Triune God, and that we are making a request which we hope that God will grant by reason of the effect worked by the redemptive death of His Son. This means, of course, that we must be aware of the teachings of dogmatic theology. Furthermore the examination of our responsibilities as priests necessarily includes an understanding of moral and spiritual theology. The information contained in these sections of sacred theology must be taken into account in any truly effective meditation. And even from this point of view, that of the perfection of priestly prayer, the priest must be a theologian if he is to be a success as a priest.

We must not allow ourselves to lose sight of the fact that the priestly prayer which is enlightened and made more forceful through the process of personal and theological meditation is far more than a merely individual exercise. Definitely I as an individual priest must petition God for the graces I need in order to do my own work in the position to which I have been assigned within the true Church of Jesus Christ. But, at the same time, the

priestly prayer of the Catholic Church is essentially that of the central act of the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ Our Lord.

Just as truly as a baseball team is organized to play baseball, and just as truly as an army is organized to win a war, the Church militant of the New Testament is organized to offer the sacrifice of the Mass, which is, at the same time, the confection of the central sacrament within the sacramental system.[12] The instruction and the legislation of the Church are directed towards the acceptance of the graces wrought in and by this Eucharistic Sacrifice. This work is the basic and central activity of the Catholic Church just as surely as scheming and pushing towards the domination of the world is the central activity of the Communist Party. And this Eucharistic Sacrifice is an act which is integrated into a process of prayer.

That is the prayer which we, as the priests of the Catholic Church, offer to God every morning of our lives. It is likewise the prayer that all the members of the Church, who constitute the men and women who were called upon by St. Peter to be "as living stones built up, a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ,"[13] are privileged to make their own. In the Canon of the Mass itself we daily call upon the living God Himself to remember the men and women who are His servants, "and all of those here present whose faith and devotion are known to Thee, for whom we are offering to Thee: or who are offering to Thee, this sacrifice of praise."[14] The sacrifice which we, as the priests of God, offer to Him, and which the membership of the Church, as "a kingly priesthood,"[15] offers to God through us, is a sacrifice integrated into an act of prayer. In order to understand the import of the sacrifice we must examine the content of the prayer in which it is expressed. And for us, the ordained priests, and for the people of God who constitute the membership of the Catholic Church which is the kingly

[12] Cf. Fenton, "The Act of the Mystical Body," in *The American Ecclesiastical Review*, C, 5 (May, 1939), 397-408, and the discussion of this article by Joseph Brodie Brosnan and the author in *AER*, CII, 306-20.

[13] *I Pet.*, 2:5.

[14] "et omnium circumstantium, quorum tibi fides cognita est et nota devotio, pro quibus tibi offerimus: vel qui tibi offerunt hoc sacrificium laudis."

[15] Cf. *I Pet.*, 2:9.

priesthood, the examination and the understanding of that prayer is the act of prayerful meditation.

Ultimately the purpose of the universe itself, the purpose which God had in mind when He brought the universe into being and conserved it, is to be realized through the power of the redemptive act of Jesus Christ and through the prayer of His Mystical Body. Made efficacious by the power of the redemption itself, this corporate prayer of the supernatural kingdom of God on earth is the cause of marvels far beyond anything that ever has been accomplished or ever will be accomplished through the study of the natural sciences.

Our meditation and the meditation of our people will enable us to see the meaning and the direction of that prayer. Meditation will show us the purpose and the direction of the life of the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, just as meditation with reference to our own individual petitions to God will show us what must be the direction and the motivation of our own individual lives. The meditation of the people of God must be enlightened and animated by the preaching of the Catholic priesthood. And, in turn, that preaching will be empty and idle except to the extent that it is informed by the true Catholic theology, studied as the Sovereign Pontiffs themselves have told us that it must be studied. It is only the traditional Catholic theology, as something quite distinct from the ramblings of fashionable theologizers, which is of service for the meditation and the prayer and the life of God's supernatural kingdom on earth.

Very definitely, then, sacred theology has not been shown up as old fashioned or obsolete in comparison with even the most important of the modern natural sciences. The study of theology is necessary for the attainment of ends that are far superior to anything that ever has been accomplished or ever will be accomplished within the area of purely natural human science. And Catholic priests of our own day and of our own country will be naive indeed if they allow the contemporary glorification of natural sciences to blind them to the supreme importance of what is, after all, their own professional discipline.

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Answers to Questions

WHEN DOES THE OBLIGATION TO FAST CEASE?

Question: In *The American Ecclesiastical Review* for March, 1961, p. 211, the statement is made: "A person who celebrates his fifty-ninth birthday on December 24 is free from the law of fasting from that time on . . . for the Code prescribes that the law of fasting ends with the beginning of one's sixtieth year, which is his fifty-ninth birthday." This statement seems to be contrary to the rules for reckoning time laid down by the Code, which declare that "if the *terminus a quo* (of a period) does not coincide with the beginning of the day—for example, the fourteenth year of one's age—the first day shall not be computed, and the period shall be ended at the conclusion of the day of the same date" (Can. 34, #2, n. 3). From this it seems to follow that a person is freed from the obligation of fasting only on the first day after his fifty-ninth birthday.

Answer: Some authors draw the same conclusion as our correspondent in regard to the day when a person need no longer fast because of his age. Thus, Aertnys-Damen say: "The twenty-first year of a person's age, like the seventh, it seems, is to be computed as beginning when his birthday has fully passed, so that the obligation begins at the midnight preceding the following day. Similarly, the period of obligatory fast ceases after his fifty-ninth birthday has passed" (*Theologia moralis,* I, n. 1052).

Other authors, however, support the view proposed in the March issue of *The American Ecclesiastical Review* to which our correspondent takes exception. For example, Varceno-Loiana say: "On the day on which one completes his twenty-first or his fifty-ninth year, the law of fast probably does not bind him—first, because the *terminus a quo* in such a case is not to be computed; second, because the law of fasting is *indivisible,* and hence cannot bind for only one part of a day" (*Institutiones theologiae moralis,* II, n. 487). Pescetta-Gennero, in response to the question: "Are you bound to fast on the day when you complete your twenty-first year and on the day when you begin your sixtieth year?" give the following answer: "It is disputed, and the negative opinion is probable. For

fast regards an entire day by manner of something indivisible. Hence one who is free from fasting on some part of a day is free during the entire day" (*Elementa theologiae moralis,* II, n. 770). Cocchi also upholds this view, for he says: "On the day when a person completes his twenty-first year or begins his sixtieth year, *probably* the law does not bind. For, those who are not bound to the whole are not obliged to a part" (*Commentarium in codicem juris canonici,* III, n. 88).

In other words, a person completes his fifty-ninth year and begins his sixtieth year precisely fifty-nine years after he was born at the very same moment of the day. That means that for some portion of the day (the portion following the moment corresponding to the moment of his birth fifty-nine years previously) he is in his sixtieth year, and hence is free from the obligation of fast. But a person who is free from fasting a portion of any day is free for the entire day, because he can eat as much as he wishes and as frequently as he wishes during the free portion and thus render it impossible to fast on that day. The case is somewhat similar to that of a person who intends in the course of the day to pass from a territory where there is an obligation to fast into a territory where there is no fast. He is free even in the prior territory in view of the fact that he will not be bound to fast in the other territory, since the precept is indivisible (cf. Merkelbach, *Summa theologiae moralis,* I, n. 359).

Because of the authorities in its favor and their arguments, I believe that the opinion expressed in *The American Ecclesiastical Review* can be safely followed.

ICE AND THE EUCHARISTIC FAST

Question: Does a person break the eucharistic fast by eating ice shortly before Holy Communion? I am thinking particularly of one who takes a glass of water containing ice, and chews the ice.

Answer: I believe it is sufficiently probable that unmelted ice can be called water to allow it to be chewed and eaten at any time before Holy Communion. In other words, there is good reason to believe that the first norm of the 1953 rules for the eucharistic fast, declaring that "natural water does not break the eucharistic

fast" (cf. Bouscaren, *Canon Law Digest,* IV, 275), can be extended to the chewing and eating of unmelted ice. It should be noted that the Constitution did not say that the *drinking* of water does not break the eucharistic fast.

HOW MUCH INTEREST MAY BE DEMANDED?

Question: I have in my parish a good Catholic banker who is hesitant to charge the rate of interest for short-term loans that is permitted in the State, because he fears he will thus commit the sin of usury. The rate on such loans amounts to about thirty percent annually. What shall I tell him?

Answer: You can tell him that if the State laws allow this high rate of interest on short-term loans, he may charge it without any qualms of conscience. All bankers know that the ordinary short-term loan—for example, for three months—involves a much graver risk for the bank than a long-term loan, because those who seek short-term loans are much more likely to disappear from the scene or (albeit inculpably) to find themselves unable to pay either the loan or the interest at the stipulated time.

A decree of the Holy See which can be appropriately cited in this connection was issued by the Sacred Congregation of the Propaganda in 1645. It was the answer to a question proposed by some missionaries in China, asking whether Christians could be permitted to demand on their loans an annual interest of thirty percent, a rate sanctioned by civil law. The answer of the Holy See was that Christians demanding so high an interest were not to be disturbed, if this rate was proportionate to the risk of losing the loan. (cf. Pescetta-Gennero, *Elementa theologiae moralis,* III, n. 648). Apparently, such risk was actually present, since this rate was approved by civil law. I believe that the same principle will justify the high rate demanded by those who make short-term loans today, when the civil law permits it.

A VALID CONFESSION?

Question: A penitent confesses several venial sins, the only matter he remembers, but inculpably forgets a mortal sin that is still on his soul. Suppose that his contrition is only imperfect, based

merely on fear of the punishments of purgatory, the only punishments that he feels he deserves in his present state. It would seem that he would not receive the sacrament validly, since his contrition does not include the forgotten mortal sin. On the other hand, if he pronounces the formula of imperfect contrition based merely on the fear of hell, it would seem that then too the sacrament is invalid, since his contrition does not apply to the only matter he presents, venial sins. Will you please comment on these problems?

Answer: If a person confesses only venial sins, inculpably forgetting a mortal sin, and elicits an act of imperfect contrition motivated *exclusively* by fear of the punishments of purgatory, I do not believe he would receive a valid absolution for that sin (and, of course, the venial sins would not be forgiven either). For his contrition would not include the forgotten mortal sin. I have emphasized the word *exclusively,* however, because I believe that the average person in the situation described by our questioner would have imperfect contrition (*attritio formidolosa*) sufficient for the valid absolution of his forgotten mortal sin. In other words, even though he is explicitly motivating his sorrow by the only punishments he believes he deserves—the pains of purgatory—his implicit motive is fear of whatever divine punishment he deserves, and that would include the pains of hell for anyone who has a mortal sin on his soul. Indeed, I believe that this would always be the case, unless the penitent explicitly says within himself: "I am sorry for my sins only because they deserve the punishment of purgatory, since I have no reason to fear the punishment of hell." Certainly, the average person would never have so strange an intention. It is well to add that the penitent's desire to make a good confession would include the *votum* of confessing the forgotten mortal sin, and this, joined to the implicit, but adequate, contrition for that sin, would dispose him for the indirect remission of that sin through the words of absolution.

A similar lenient decision, I believe, could be given for the other supposition, when the same penitent expresses his imperfect contrition in words that can literally be applied only to mortal sins ("because I dread the loss of heaven and the pains of hell"). I believe that his basic, though implicit, motive is fear of God's punishments, whatever they may be, in as far as he deserves them.

In such a case, I believe, his mortal sin is indirectly forgiven (through the sacramental absolution) because of the fear of hell, his venial sins because of the fear of purgatory. Whatever words he may use, the general motive of fear of punishment would suffice.

It is appropriate to add that because of such problems as our correspondent has proposed the formula for the act of contrition in the Baltimore Catechism was modified in 1941, when the new revision was issued. Instead of the old wording, "because I dread the loss of heaven and the pains of hell," children are now taught "because of thy just punishments." (Some have charged that the reason for the change was hesitancy on the part of the revisors to emphasize the doctrine of hell!). Many good persons certainly go to confession without having to confess any mortal sins (some even without any grave sin from the past). It seems incongruous for them to say that they dread the pains of hell (though, as I said above, I do not believe there is any doubt about the validity of the sacrament). The change to the words "because of thy just punishments" rectifies the formula, so that whether it refers to mortal sins or venial sins or both it is a correct expression of imperfect contrition based on the fear of the particular divine punishment which each one deserves.

FRANCIS J. CONNELL, C.SS.R.

CORPUS CHRISTI PROCESSION

Question: We have a good-sized property around our church and school and are thus able to have a rather long procession when we observe the feast of Corpus Christi. We set up two altars at various points along the route where we have Benediction before returning to the main altar in the church. I have in the past invited other priests in and each of three of us carries the monstrance for one section of the route and gives the Benediction concluding that part of the procession. Recently I heard doubt expressed about the legality of this procedure. Can you enlighten me?

Answer: The S.R.C., in its decree 2835, dated May 22, 1841, described such a custom as you depict as an abuse and says that

it is to be eliminated. One can indeed imagine Corpus Christi processions in which the single celebrant would have an almost superhuman task but *Roma locuta est.*

OMITTING THE LONG PASSION

Question: In our parish we have quite a few people who have to work on Sunday. Many of them attend the first Mass in our Church at 6:30 a.m. In order to be of service to those who must leave as soon as possible, we usually put off the reading of the gospel, the announcements, and the sermon until the Postcommunion of the Mass. On Palm Sunday, a discussion arose among the priests regarding the reading of the Passion. Because of the circumstances which prevail in our parish, would it be permissible for the priest who was celebrating the first two Masses to reverse the usual order and read the short Gospel at the first Mass, and then read the much longer Passion at the later Mass?

Answer: The literal translation of the rubric on the omission of the Passion, as found in the new OHS, § 11, is: "He who celebrates a second or third Mass today is not obliged to repeat (*iterare*) the reading of the Passion of the Lord, but in its place reads the subjoined Gospel in the usual manner" (The text of Mt. 27, 45-52 is then given). From the word *iterare* it might be gathered that the reading of the long Passion would have to come first. However, such an authority as J. B. O'Connell, in his *The Ceremonies of Holy Week,* p. 84, note 5, says: "If C. has to celebrate two or three Masses he is obliged to say the Passion at only the chief Mass." Justification for this interpretation might be found, it seems to me, in the quinquennial faculty granted to Bishops of the United States before the OHS was introduced "To permit, in the Mass of Holy Week when the Passion is said, that priests who by special indult celebrate two Masses, read, in one of them, only the latter part of the Passion" (Bouscaren-O'Connor, *Canon Law Digest,* 4, p. 77).

OIL AND NAUSEA

Question: What is the possibility that the odor of the oil on the fingertips may nauseate the patient receiving Viaticum when the last Sacraments are administered in the proper order?

Answer: When the last Sacraments are administered together on the same occasion, the proper order, according to an unquestioned liturgical book, is the Sacrament of Penance, holy Viaticum, and Extreme Unction (*Rituale Romanum, Titulus* V, *Cap.* 1, #2, 1945 ed. Benziger; *Matters Liturgical,* No. 371, *f* and 377, *b;* cf. also *Collectio Rituum* for the Dioceses of Ireland [1960], p. 93: *Ritus Continuus Infirmum Muniendi Sacramentis Extremis;* and the *Rituale Parvum* for French-speaking Dioceses [1956], in which there is no *Ritus Continuus* given but the order I have given is followed in the text, pp. 98-110). To be sure your problem will remain if you follow our own ill-fated *Collectio.* But, prescinding entirely from the administration of holy Viaticum, may I ask if your problem is not even greater when you anoint the nostrils (*nares*) and the mouth? Has anyone ever complained?

A SERVER FOR CONVENT MASSES

Question: It would seem to be the custom to say Mass in convents without an altar boy and with the Sisters giving the responses. From what I can see in theology books, it would seem that if an altar boy can be had then the Priest should have one when saying Mass in a convent. Therefore, could you tell me whether there should be an altar boy serving Mass in the convent? If there is no obligation, is it more in conformity with the mind of the Church to have an altar boy in this particular case?

Answer: In my opinion, you are reading the theology books aright and surely it would be more in conformity with the mind of the Church to have a server for Mass in a convent. For a recent and interesting discussion of Mass without a server, see "The Mass Server and Canon 29" in *Theological Studies,* 21 (1960), pp. 256-270.

GENUFLECTING AT COMMUNION TIME

Question: Is there anything authoritative on genuflecting before and after the reception of Holy Communion at the altar rail? I have in my parish a number of people from various sections of the country and I note among them varying customs in this matter.

Answer: The S.R.C., replying under date of July 18, 1942, to a question on this matter which had been submitted by a Domestic Prelate of a Hungarian diocese, said that a simple genuflection should be made both before and after the reception of Communion.

JOHN P. MCCORMICK, S.S.

Book Reviews

THE FOUR GOSPELS: AN HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION. By Lucien Cerfaux. Westminster, Md.: Newman Press, 1961. Pp. 145. $3.00.

The latest work of Monsignor Cerfaux recalls the observation made by St. Augustine to Paulinus that God wished difficulties to be scattered through the sacred books inspired by Him in order that we might be urged to read and scrutinize them more intently and experience in a salutary manner our own limitations. The author is not slow to remind the reader that some biblical matters are obscure in themselves and are too far removed from our times and experiences for simple solutions. Nonetheless he has grappled with one of the most difficult biblical problems, the formation of the canonical gospels, to find an acceptable solution and simultaneously to refute the objections of rationalists and free thinkers. Obviously not all within or without the Church will agree with his conclusions. Liberals will find in him a champion while conservatives will classify him as a destroyer of long cherished concepts. One is tempted to paraphrase Tertullian to the effect that "truth demands this at least that it should not be condemned unheard." Cerfaux should not only be heard but he should be read and reread with care. This is not a book for a beginner despite its title. It presupposes a familiarity with the text and some knowledge of form criticism. It demands an appreciation of the dogmatic principles underlying scriptural theology. Without the latter one would run the risk of accepting the paper and glue pot theories so prevalent before World War I. Cerfaux notes carefully the difference between fact and opinion. His judgments are logical, balanced and progressively developed. While he formulates opinions which will appear to some as new and untried, he exhibits a saneness of approach not uncommon among those having breadth and depth in a field. Undoubtedly his orthodoxy will be questioned by those who imagine that everything new should be opposed or suspected. The vast majority of Catholic students will be indebted to him for a work which might well become a classic in its field.

Title and subtitle describe the work precisely. It is an historical introduction to the formation of the four gospels and the milieu in which they developed. One notes quickly that it is not a proposed solution for the synoptic problem though the reader might find the material on which to base his own conclusions. The stress is rather on the indi-

viduality and viewpoint of each evangelist. The analyses of the four accounts is particularly well done. One might disagree with minor details, but in general he will agree on the larger picture.

The book contains eight well packed chapters of almost equal length. The first is probably the strongest. In it the author establishes his theses on oral tradition and its many facets. The recourse to the notion that the gospels are a permanent record of the voice of God to perpetuate the apostolic voices soon to be silenced in death repeats itself like a pleasant theme. Chapters Two through Five apply the concepts of Chapter One to the four gospel accounts. Chapter Six entitled the Tetramorphic Gospel explains the transition from the oral to the written gospels. Chapter Seven examines the apocryphal gospels and related questions. Chapter Eight integrates the work with a treatment of the Christian life under the sign of the Gospel. A short reflection concludes the work.

The reviewer recommends the work without reservation for those who read with discernment. This is not a book for a beginner who needs a Philip to guide him. In this sense it is not an introduction. Canon Cerfaux deserves credit for his masterful contribution to this area of scriptural lore. He has taken to heart these words from the *Divino afflante Spiritu:* "There remain, therefore, many things, and of the greatest importance, in the discussion and exposition of which the skill and genius of Catholic commentators may and ought to be freely exercised, so that each may contribute his part to the advantage of all, to the continued progress of the sacred doctrine, and to the defense and the honor of the Church."

GERALD T. KENNEDY, O.M.I.

LEO XIII AND THE MODERN WORLD. Edited by Edward T. Gargan. New York: Sheed and Ward, 1961. Pp. 246. $4.50.

A prefatory note states that this work is made up of seven papers read at a symposium held at Loyola University in Chicago on March 18, 1960, with the addition of two other papers. The occasion of the symposium was the 150th anniversary of the birth of Pope Leo XIII. The editor, who is a member of the history department at Loyola University, contributes an introduction to the papers. The other contributors are the Most Rev. Egidio Vagnozzi, D.D., Apostolic Delegate to the United States, the Rt. Rev. Msgr. Joseph N. Moody, Professors James Collins, S. William Halperin, and Kenneth Scott Latourette, and Fathers Raymond H. Schmandt, Eric McDermott, Thomas T.

McAvoy, and Gustave Weigel. The book also contains a selected bibliography and notes on the contributors. There is no index. A number of typographical errors have been noted.

Two articles are general discussions of the life and work of Leo XIII and the Church and the world in the nineteenth century; the others are more specialized discussions of the relations of Leo XIII to the social crisis, the Roman question, the United States, certain problems in England, scholastic philosophy, and contemporary theology. Expectedly, the articles vary in length and quality. While they are subject to the limitations imposed by their occasion and diverse authorship, the collection has considerable interest and value. It serves to bring out various aspects of Leo XIII's aims and abilities, the huge problems that confronted him, and the immensity of his achievements. For more than a century the Church has been blessed with great popes and the name of Leo XIII is high among them.

Archbishop Vagnozzi presents an effective summation of the character and greatness of Leo XIII as Pope. During the twenty-five years of his pontificate he saw that the Church's strength "was to be found essentially and fundamentally in its organization, the world-wide support of its faithful, the prestige of the Papacy among all people, and above all in the eternal promise of the Lord. . . . For this reason we can rightly say that Pope Leo XIII is the first of the modern popes who, completely detached from the care and trouble of temporal sovereignty, placed their position and mission at the sole service of the spiritual welfare of mankind. Once dispossessed of the exercise of civil power, the Papacy has grown tremendously in world importance and influence. In great part this is due to Pope Leo XIII."

In "Leo XIII and the Philosophical Approach to Modernity" Prof. James Collins provides a solid, thoroughly argued, and clearly expressed analysis of Leo XIII's contribution to philosophy and applies the Pope's basic principles to certain contemporary needs and problems. He points out: "In outlining the main functions for the Christian philosopher today, the Pope usually specifies three areas of work. One task is to reread and revivify the wisdom of the ancient Greek and Roman sources. Another is to feed upon and develop the Christian wisdom slowly elaborated by the Fathers and Scholastic doctors, especially St. Thomas. And finally, one must make a careful study of the fruits of modern research in the physical, psychological, social, and historical fields, especially for the relevant light they cast on philosophical issues. . . . There is a sharply practical note in all the papal teachings during the past eighty years on the subject of Christian philosophy. . . . The Christian philosopher must preserve his roots in

the great sources of the past, but he has to carry on his own work within the field defined by the modern centuries of inquiry and discovery."

These and certain other aspects of the philosophical problem are developed by the writer in an effective and enlightening way. Dr. Collins' article is an illustration of what he and many other contemporary American Catholic teachers, thinkers, and writers are doing in their field to carry out one of the greatest and most lasting of the tasks that Pope Leo XIII set for himself over eighty years ago.

JOHN K. RYAN

ENCOUNTERS WITH SILENCE. By Karl Rahner, S.J. Translated by James M. Demske, S.J., Westminster, Md.: Newman Press, 1960. Pp. 87. $1.95.

Oftentimes a writer is praised for couching deep theological truths in simple language. It can be said with truth and to his praise that Father Karl Rahner in this book reveals the profundity of simple truths. In ten equally-spaced chapters the author considers a variety of subjects, giving them a unique "twist," obviously the result of a great deal of meditation. What the author has developed through long hours of thought, the reader will acquire with a few moments of reflection.

If clarity and profundity were not enough, there is the added pleasantness of style which reminds one very much of St. Augustine's "Confessions." The subjects are presented in the form of a monologue and in each of them objections are raised, sometimes subtly, sometimes openly, against the existing state of things in God's universe. These situations are presented as obstacles to perfection, and our attention is fastened upon them when we begin to realize that they are an almost perfect statement of our own unexpressed feelings. It is not only Father Rahner's answers to the objections that are pleasing but the very fact that he poses the difficulty so clearly.

Along that line, then, it is certainly the chapter on "God of Law" which proved to be more than satisfying to this reviewer. It deals in a masterful way with the usual objections springing from human weakness in the face of rules and regulations artificially imposed by higher authority upon our "true freedom." The ninth chapter is entitled: "The God of my Vocation." In it Father exhibits the profound humility which should be the standard of all priests. Man is confused and confounded to realize that God has chosen him, with all his failings, to transmit God's word and His life to his fellow man. "You have

equipped me with your word, your truth, your sacraments. And you have attached these things to my ministry in such a way that they penetrate into the inmost regions of free souls only when these souls accept me, only when they take me along in the bargain."

Each of the chapters serves not only as a source of materials for meditation but even as a starting point for retreat conferences. If a characteristic note were to be given this book, it would be: "Unique in its insight into divine-human reality."

GEORGE F. KIRWIN, O.M.I.

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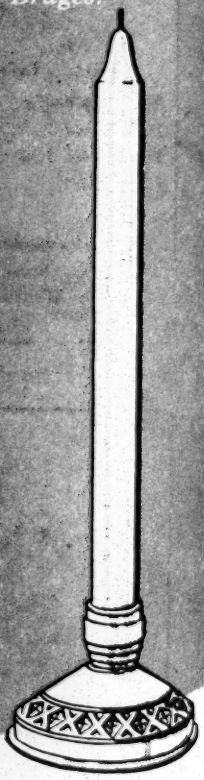

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